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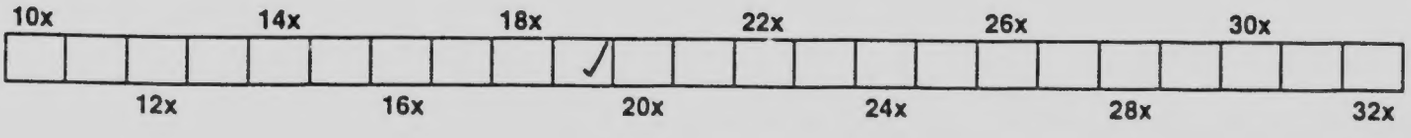

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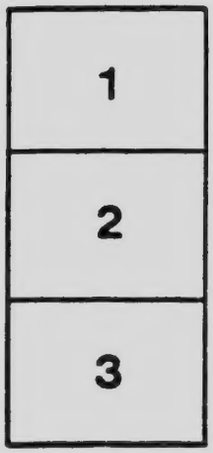

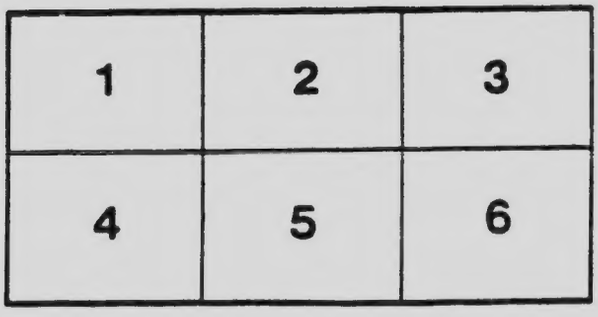

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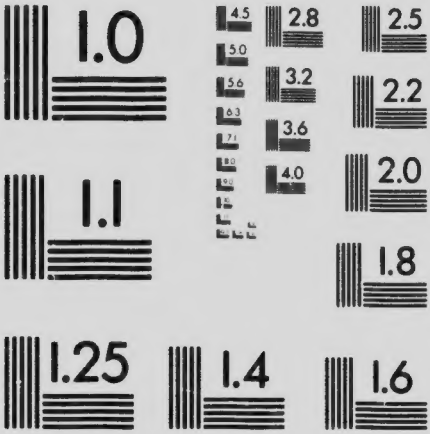

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Letters from the Sea

Letters from the Sea

Vol. I

Printed for Private Circulation only

1911

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B113

ADELPHI
#1250
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INTRODUCTION

THESE letters were written by our eldest son, Edward Ashley Baird, late Lieutenant-Commander, H.M.S. *Britomart*: some from the *Britannia*, where he went as a naval cadet when thirteen years old, and the remainder from H.M.S. *Triumph*, the ship in which he went for his first cruise at the age of fifteen.

The *Triumph* was commanded by Captain (now Admiral) H. Rose, R.N., and was the flagship of the Pacific Squadron, then commanded by Admiral J. K. E. Baird, our son's uncle.

Letters from the Sea

I.

H.M.S. *Britannia*. 1883.

My dearest Mother,—I am getting on very well here, but there is very little to do. It is an awfully funny thing, but the chaps here are allowed to buy grub on Sunday, when we go on shore in the afternoons. I bought a shilling's-worth of this paper, with the crest on. The *Britannia* consists of two ships joined together by a passage, namely, the *Britannia* and the *Hindostan*. I did not buy any grub when I went on shore this afternoon, because I was afraid you would not like me to. Will you tell me whether you think it is right? I am certain they are allowed to buy it, because the Lieutenant who looks after us went round past the shop when all the chaps were in it. There has been very little to do as yet, for we have only just been hanging about the ship, except when we were at lessons or on shore. It was very wet for the most part of Saturday.—Your loving

Edward Baird.

II.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* 1883.

My dear Mother,—I got here all right on Thursday, and felt none the worse for the turtle soup I had. My best jacket was not much the worse for its being crammed into the portmanteau. On Saturday I cut my finger rather badly, as I cut it across the knuckle right to the bone. It did not hurt much the first day, but on Sunday evening I was awake the whole night till six in the morning, and as we turn out at half-past six I did not get much sleep. Last Wednesday I went to the cliffs and got some jackdaws' eggs. On Friday evening I dined with Captain Bowden Smith at half-past seven, and we had a jolly good dinner. There were three other chaps besides me, named Johnson, Morant, and Fair. We went at half-past seven and stopped till ten. We had soup, fish, veal cutlets, chicken and tongue, jelly, things with cream on top, dessert. I had two wine-glasses of wine, as every one else had some, but I can't say I liked it very much. Yesterday, I went eight and a-half miles to Slapton Mere to try and get some eggs, but we met a Lieutenant of ours named Mr Wodehouse, who hired a rod and line for us, and let us fish. We caught twenty-one perch besides a lot too small for eating, which we shied back. After we had done fishing, Lieutenant Wodehouse gave us some tea, and drove us back in a dogcart. The chap who was with me was Halsey, who you have heard of before. Out of the money we get on the Queen's Birthday we intend to each give 2s. 6d.

so as to buy the Lieutenant a present for being so jolly to us.

I hope they are all right at home, and that your face is all right, too. Tell father we walked the eight and a-half miles going to Slapton in one hour twenty-five minutes, which is more than five miles an hour.—Your loving son, EDWARD BAIRD.

III.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* 10*th June* 1883.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Please write as soon as you can to say the day and train which you come by, as I shall most likely be able to come and meet you, if we are not in study at the time. On ordinary days I could meet you at any time between half-past three and nine, and on half-holidays any time between twelve and nine. I think it would be best to come on a Tuesday, as that is the day before the first half-holiday in the week. I forgot to tell you in my last letter that we began bathing last Sunday. We had an awfully wet day last Wednesday. I hope it will keep fine during the time you are here. I send my list of eggs :—1 seagull's, 1 jackdaw's, 1 linnet's, 1 yellow-hammer's, 2 pheasant's, 1 pigeon's, 1 green-finch's, 2 chaffinch's, 1 starling's, 1 chiff-chaff's. I cannot remember all the rest. I found a tom-tit's nest yesterday, with a lot of young ones in, and they were just fledged. Tell Helena that if you could keep them I would try to get her some to keep.—Your loving son,

E. A. BAIRD.

IV.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* Sunday, 15*th July* 1883.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I start from here by the 7.13 a.m. on Friday next. According to my observations in the Bradshaw, I get to Fordingbridge by the 2.9 p.m., but I am not quite certain, as I am not an over practised hand. Ben has got the mullygrubs again somewhere about him, and has gone to the hospital, so he can't do his exams. It will put him a term back, I am afraid, but I don't expect he will mind much. I can't make out what's the row with him. When I last saw him he had a silk handkerchief tied round his neck. I am getting on finely with my exam., but I don't think I did my physical geography very well, although I am pretty sure that I passed in it. There is only five days more now. I hope you have got some blackberry jam in the store-room, as there are no strawberries, because cream and blackberry jam are spiffing when they are mixed together. How's father getting on? I hope he is keeping that rifle clean, ready for me to use. Won't I shoot a lot of rabbits when I get home, by Jove! This is a jolly long letter, so you must write me a jolly long one back or I won't give you any cream. I will bring all my clothes back if you like, only there won't be room for my hammock, or I could bring that. Are all the girls at home now? Ask Barby and the twins if they are coming out ferreting with me next holidays? Has Tizard ever seen that pike since it has been stuffed? Ask him if he knows where any more big ones are. If he does, tell him I will come and catch 'em for him. Good-bye.—Your loving son, EDWARD A. BAIRD.

V.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* 1*st Dec.* 1883.

My dear Mother,—I was cobbed out of bounds last week, and I was brought up before the skipper, who gave me six cuts over my behind, besides stopping my pocket-money for two weeks. There were several other fellows cobbed with me, and we were all taken down into the cockpit, where we were lashed over a chest. There were three corporals and three canes to lick nine of us. It did not hurt much, but if we are brought up many more times before the skipper I am afraid that it will count rather against us in the end, although I don't think this alone will make much difference. I am sorry I did not write last Sunday, but my pocket-money being stopped I could not get a stamp. I have done my seamanship exam., and I have also done my essay. Are there any rats and rabbits at home now? I am working up hard for the exams. I hope nothing is wrong with any of the ferrets now, as I shall want to begin the day after I get home. Are Judy and Nelly all right? —Your loving son, Edward A. Baird.

VI.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* 1883.

My dear Mother,—Captain Brent, the Staff Commander, who teaches us all about charts and sextants, says that Elliot in the Strand is a very

good place to get sextants. The Commander, Mr Bainbridge, has given me leave to bring a ferret next term. I waited till I found him in an especially good humour, and then I went in and asked him. A chap named Fergusson fell about a quarter of the way down the cliffs yesterday, and stunned himself. He cut his head rather, and scraped his leg, but he wasn't so very bad. He has gone to the hospital now, I believe, for he did not come on board. He fell about twenty or thirty feet altogether.—Your loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

VII.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* 1884.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am very sorry I did not write before, only I cut the two knuckles of the two middle fingers of my right hand rather badly, and they had to be bound up, so I could not write, but I have only got sticking-plaster bound round them now, so that I can manage. I am going to send you the *Britannia* photographed in two different views; they cost a shilling each. It is an awful botner about my knuckles, as I can't play cricket, or go out rowing, or anything. I arrived on board quite safely. Has father asked you whether you will come and stay here for a short time? Tell me in your next letter if you will. I hope my fingers will be right soon, as it is awful rot being kept out of the games. I wonder when

Uncle Freddy is going to ask me out. I wish the fire had been a day or two before, as I should have liked to have gone to it. How long did it keep burning? I hope Mary and Di and the little ones are all right. Good-bye from—Your loving son,

EDWARD A. BAIRD.

VIII.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* 1884.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Did you ask father whether he had forgotten about my rat tails? I am going to ask the Commander, soon, if I cannot bring a ferret with me next term. I shall not be able to bring a dog, as I suppose it will cost too much for it to be kept for me. How do Boy and Conty get on with their lessons? Do they get many good marks still? Tell Kitty to give my ferret a run as often as she can, or else he will get fat. There are an awful lot of rats about here, and no one ferrets them. I could kill a good lot of them if the Commander will let me bring a ferret. The weather has been a little finer for the last two or three days, but it rains every now and then. How is my gun getting on? Has father been out shooting lately? —Your loving son, EDWARD A. BAIRD.

P.S.—I got your letter just after I had done my letter to you, so I had to open it again. I have got a clothes-brush and also a new cap. I hope you will soon be better. Mary may have the mouse cage, most certainly. Will you tell her? I am awfully glad that my Mum ferret is found.

IX.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* 1884.

My dear Mother,—I went to the dentist's to-day at Torquay, who is supposed to be a very good one. I had two side teeth out. The first one came out pretty easily, only giving me a nasty wrench, but he took nearly two minutes getting out the second, which was the one which has been aching so much lately. It gave me awful pain, and the man who was there with me had to hold me down, because I kicked out so. The dentist said he had not known such a tough one for a long time. I am very sorry you have got that pain again. I hope it will soon be better. I have not been to the doctor about my knee yet, as I hope it will get better. When it hurts most now is when I kneel on it, which if I do it gives way altogether. I am glad Helena rides better now. Does she ride a big horse? Will you ask father if he thinks I shall be able to go out stag-hunting next holidays, as he said perhaps I should be able to, last time? It hurts me awfully to eat anything now, as my gums are so tender. The Lieutenant has told me to get a suit of best clothes, as the ones I have now are too untidy. I send you another *Britannia* this time. I am trying to get as few punishments as I can, and I have only had a very few, none of which were very serious ones. The most serious one was talking to another chap at drill, which was not so very bad. Did you bring any of the other girls up to London with you? Tell Kitty

to handle the ferrets a good deal, so as not to let Jumbo get fierce again. I have not been to the Teages' since I told you some time ago.—Your loving son,

E. A. BAIRD.

X.

H.M.S. *Britannia*. *March* 1884.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am very sorry I did not write to you before, but I lost my stamp, and I had to wait till Saturday before I could buy one. I had a line from Silver about my things, so I got measured here. I think it would be best if you sent me that 3d., as I can easily pay the editors and you would hardly know what to do. There is only five weeks more, and the time is going jolly quickly. I don't expect my ferret will cost much more than 5s. to keep, and I could pay that out of my pocket-money at the beginning of the term. You did not tell me where my mother ferret was found. Mr Aldous talks to us for about three-quarters of an hour after church, and he had me up last Sunday into his cabin and talked to me about it. He does not seem to believe much in those little books on Confirmation, as he says that every one else's life is different to ours. That knee which I hurt out hunting last holidays has been very bad for some time; it is better, but rather stiff, and hurts a good deal when I jump or anything like that.—Your loving son,

E. A. BAIRD.

XI.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* *April* 1884.

My dear Mother, I never found those stamps again after you sent them to me. The sports come off on Wednesday this week, and I shall be confirmed next Sunday. I have been thinking a good deal about my Confirmation lately, and we go up to Mr Aldous every evening after the other chaps have turned in, for about half an hour or so. It will be an awful joke having my ferret here next term. I am so glad you are better now, and I hope you will keep all right. Will you ask father the name of the master of the stag-hounds which I am going to hunt with next holidays? Ask Kitty if Jumbo is at all fierce now, or whether he is as tame as I left him. I am going to bring Jumbo here, as I want to breed his old mother again. The term has passed much quicker than I expected, as we have plenty to do now. There are hundreds of rats about here, so I expect I shall have plenty of fun with them next term. The beagles stopped going out last Wednesday, but yesterday we had a paper-chase. I have got leave from one of the farmers about here named Farmer Wyatt to go on his grounds, and he says he has got lots of rats in some parts of them. Please will you send me two pieces of ribbon about six inches long and one inch broad, as we each have to have a colour in the sports, and these are mine. Please send them by Wednesday morning if you can, as I shall want them during the day. There is only a week more on Wednesday. I will come by the 7.13 as usual.—
Your loving son, E. A. Baird.

XII.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* *6th April* 1884.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I was confirmed this morning. I intend to try and do better than I have been doing for some time, and I hope to be able to. I got your letter this morning. We had a service last night at eight o'clock, and also this morning at the same time, before breakfast. We had a clergyman from Stoke-Fleming last night to preach to us, whose name was Mr St Alban. I am sure I have heard him preach somewhere else, although I cannot remember where. I got my measurement and gave it to the man here who has to see to all those sort of things, as I thought he would understand what to do better, and he said he would write then, but I have not had my new things from Silver's yet. I have got four rooks' eggs for our collection. Will you tell Alice and Kitty, as we have got none yet? I got twenty-one altogether this year, only I gave the rest away. It is awfully funny, but no one has got any rooks' eggs this year, except he has been with me, so every one has been asking me to come out with them lately. How big is Helena's new pony? Do you think it will be able to go as well as Arabi or not? I will bring a pot of cream back at the end of this term. Every one on board has got crape on his left arm, as we are all in mourning for Prince Leopold, who died the other day. It seems very hard to do right all at once, as I am afraid I have been getting into several bad habits, but I am going to try.—Your loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

XIII.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* *16th March* 1884.

My dear Mother,—I suppose father told you about my falcon. He is a beautiful bird, and I think he is going to live, as he eats bread soaked in milk and raw meat very well. It is awfully jolly bathing in this weather, and I can swim jolly well now, although I can't dive, which I wish I could. I have got a young bullfinch for one of the twins, a young great-tit for the other, and two young great-tits for Helena. The chap who is keeping my falcon for me has fitted up a perch in one corner of a room, and put a shackle round his leg with a line attached to it. There is a good-sized flat box underneath, which he can hop about in if he likes, but he prefers sitting up on the perch all day. He has got awfully sharp talons, and a great long sharp hook to his beak. I hope when I get home I shall be able to teach him to catch birds and rats for me. In the nest where he was there were a lot of rats' tails and rooks' feathers, so I suppose the old one had been killing them for him. If I had found the nest at home I might have got a penny for each rat's tail there was. I am getting on all right with my work now. The Teages are going to invite me to their place next Saturday. I am going to stop to Communion service this morning. I hope all the young ferrets are getting on all right. I must try and teach my falcon to know what the ferrets are, so that he won't attack them if I take him out with them.—Your loving son, Edward A. Baird.

P.S.—I send you a paper.

XIV.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* *May* 1884.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Will you ask Helena to take those two cole-tits' eggs if she has not taken them already? Ask her if she minds taking two instead of one. I want to know whether you can send me my rabbit-net box full of cotton-wool, or at all events as much as you can spare in it, as I have got a whole lot of different kinds of eggs this term, with nowhere to keep them. I will send you a list of all I have got:—4 rooks', 2 water-ousels', 2 linnets', 2 long-tailed tits', 2 missel-thrushes', 2 chiff-chaffs', 4 jackdaws, besides a few more which I cannot think of just now. That sextant did all right, and I have used it twice already. The Queen's Birthday is on the 24th of this month, and then I intend, if nothing prevents me, to go to Start Point to get some sea-gulls' eggs. I hope "Jumbo" and his mother are all right. Will you tell me when his mother has some more young ones, as she is going to have some soon? Ask Helena whether her little nest in the Shepherd's Hill Wood has had eggs in yet?—Your loving son,

EDWARD A. BAIRD.

P.S.—I went to Communion service last Sunday.

XV.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* 5*th May* 1884.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Ben told me to thank you very much for that ticket, and he wants to know

whether it gives him permission to go in as many times as he likes, or only once. I have got to write and ask you to send written leave to go to the Teages', as I shall not be able to go another time unless I have written leave. On Wednesday, Ben and I and thirteen other chaps went out in the *Syren*, that small schooner yacht you saw, and we went round the point into Torbay, where we were becalmed, and so, after we had been on shore, and had a bathe, and gone on board again, we had to be towed into Torquay by one of the boats, when we went ashore, leaving the yacht at anchor, and came back here by train. The *Syren* came round the next day, as she got a breeze. Ben's finger is getting on pretty well, only he has to take great care and not knock it, because if he did it would begin to bleed again. There is a German frigate come into the harbour, with a lot of German cadets on board. Their captain came on board yesterday. He had an awful jolly uniform, with a lot of medals and crosses on his breast.—Your loving son, EDWARD A. BAIRD.

XVI.

H.M.S. *Britannia*. *8th July* 1884.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am sorry I have not written before, but our examination in essay came off yesterday, and I had to work up my essay every spare minute of my time. I hope the young

ferrets are getting on all right. I had a fight with a fellow the other day, because he hit me in the eye during dinner, and I licked him easily. He was hardly as tall as me, but a good bit heavier and stronger. We are having rare jolly weather now. I went to Start Point on the whole holiday, and did not go on the boating expedition after all, as I particularly wanted to go to Start Point to get some more gulls' eggs. I will send you a list of the eggs I have got this term. The two seagulls' were very hard set, and so were the chiff-chaffs'. I am going to hard-boil the seagulls' and try and make the chin-chaffs' rot away, as if I boiled them they would crack, because the shell is so thin. I got the five bob you sent me. Thank you very much indeed for it, as I was afraid when I wrote that I should get it too late.—Your loving son,

EDWARD A. BAIRD.

XVII.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* 13*th July* 1884.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Will you ask Kitty whether she is quite sure that they are young bullfinches that she knows, as the ones we got last year were not bullfinches at all, but linnets? Tell her a bullfinch makes its nest entirely of sticks, and the young birds have got huge great ugly-shaped beaks, and if you put your finger in them they bite awfully hard. I am glad to hear that six young ferrets have been born, and I hope that they will all live.

I hope the old mother is none the worse. There is another whole holiday soon; we have leave from twelve on Friday till nine on Saturday. Birds'-nesting time is almost over now, as there are young birds in almost all the nests I find. I found a nest of three young jays the other day, and they were awfully pretty. We began bathing last Thursday; the water was awfully cold for the first two days, but after that it was warmer. I have got two papers for you, only I have always forgotten to write and ask you for a paper-wrapper, as we cannot get them here. I saw an eagle on the Queen's Birthday, up at a place called Berry Pomeroy, near Totnes. It was a huge great brown bird, three or four times as big as a sparrow-hawk. I will send you a list of my eggs to tell the others, and will you ask Helena to send me the cole-tits' without their other eggs to be blown? Will you get somebody to ask Tizard whether he has got me any snipes' eggs yet, and also what other eggs he has got for me?—Your loving son,

EDWARD A. BAIRD.

XVIII.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* *20th July* 1884.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Our instructor gave a prize of a bag of stodge to whoever did the best chart in our class the other day, and I got it. I got ninety-three marks for it out of a hundred full. I want to know if I may have 5s. so as to pay my share in

an expedition some fellows have got up. We are going in a boat up the river; there are five of us altogether, besides a seamanship instructor, who we have to have to keep us out of mischief, though he is not much good in that way. I hope the young ferrets are all right. One of my young bullfinches is dead, but the other is all right so far and feeds himself quite well, besides being able to fly about. I have no more time now.—Your loving son, EDWARD A. BAIRD.

XIX.

H.M.S. *Britannia*. *7th October* 1884.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am very sorry I did not write last week, but as soon as I got your letter Halsey wrote home to his people about that going to the Pacific, and is waiting for an answer, and it's not come yet, so I don't suppose it will be any use waiting longer. I suppose Uncle John will be going out to the Pacific soon. Did you see the eclipse of the moon last night? I have got a *Britannia* to send you, if you will send me a paper-wrapper. I have joined a thing called a Bible Union, which is, you have to read a certain number of verses of the Bible every day, and it is marked on a card which is given to you what you have to read every day. You are given a number, and your name and number are written on the outside of the card, and are also registered in a book. I am really working hard now, and I have not been as yet reported to

the Commander, and I hope to keep out of punishments for the whole term. I hope that you and all the others are quite well. Are my hawk and ferret all right? I hope that the young ferrets are better again. I hope that my old ferret did not get the foot-rot, as well as the young ones, as she takes such a long time getting well. Tell Helena that I am very sorry I did not write on her birthday, but I will write soon now, and I will tell her why. We have been having very jolly weather lately, except that it is very cold early in the morning. Give my love to father. I hope that you will soon write to me.—Your loving son,

EDWARD A. BAIRD.

I stopped behind to Communion service to-day.

XX.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* 14*th October* 1884.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I forgot all about that *Britannia*, but I will send it now. I have shot two great-tits, and a long-tailed tit, and I want to know if I may get them stuffed, as they are awfully pretty. Please write and tell me this as soon as possible whether I may have them stuffed, or they will not keep. I hope that you will let me have them stuffed, as they are awfully pretty, and would look beautiful in the drawing-room, or in your room. I wish you could come here on Friday and stop till Monday evening at nine, and it would be so nice if

I could come and stop with you the whole time. I have got very little time now. It is a beastly wet morning. I shot an old thrush the other day, and I got him roasted and he tasted awfully good. There are heaps of eating chestnuts about here, and I get lots. I am keeping well out of trouble, and I have got into no rows except that little one I told you of. I would like father to bring the rifle very much, and I think I might get leave from the head-keeper to let us have a shot at the rooks, as they are pretty tame, because I often get a shot at them with my catapult. They fly away directly you fire, but come back again after about two minutes. I have no more time. Don't forget those tits. — Your loving son, EDWARD A. BAIRD.

XXI.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* *4th November* 1884.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am afraid I am too late for this evening's post. I am afraid that the girls would not be able to join the Bible Union that I am in; but if you wrote to Mr Aldous I am sure he would send you a card with what you have to read every day on it, the only difference being that you would not sign your name or have a number given to you. The weather has got much colder here now. Halsey has had a letter of leave from his parents now to go to the Pacific. Uncle John has promised a chap named Lambert that he will apply for him; he is a very nice sort of chap. We have a

whole holiday on the 9th of November this term, as it is the Prince of Wales's birthday, but I don't suppose you will be able to come to it, as it is so close after the twins' birthday. I hope it will get warmer than it is now, or else I am afraid it would be too cold for your travelling, if it keeps like it is now. I have had one very slight punishment, but it is nothing that would count against my conduct, as it was only for laughing rather too loud at something or other. The 9th of November is the only whole holiday this term, except the three days' leave, which I think I told you about the fourth term had at the end of the term. C—— has got in an awful row for fagging two first-term cadets. He got flogged publicly, and then fourteen days of second class, which means that he has to wear a white stripe on his arm, has an hour's drill every day, has to stand up an hour in the evening after the other chaps have turned in, has to march up one of these hills with a sergeant every day, is never allowed to speak to other chaps, but is shut up in a cabin by himself when not working, and has to sit up by himself at meals; and after he has done all this for fourteen days, he has to promise the Captain that he will never fag another chap in his life. Every one thought it was awfully hard on him. Did you see that in the paper, that three cadets had had a triangular duel after Midshipman Easy's fashion on board the *Northumberland*? and that one of the chaps had got his pistol loaded instead of having a blank charge, and that he shot another fellow through the cheek? I knew all of the fellows when they were here, and I can quite

believe that that chap would leave his pistol loaded, as he was about the most careless chap I ever knew, and didn't care what he did.

It is very kind of Uncle John to say that he would lend me his guns sometimes. I must get father to take me out rabbit-shooting several times next holidays, so that I can get a better shot. I have not been invited to the Teages' yet this term. Give my love to father and all the girls.

I have written you a nice long letter now, as we came out earlier from church than usual, which gave me more time before turning in.—Your loving son. EDWARD A. BAIRD.

XXII.

H.M.S. *Britannia.* *25th November* 1884.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am very sorry that I did not write to you last Sunday, but I forgot all about it in the evening, and I had very little time during the day. I have shot sixteen birds since you left. Among them were a water-wagtail and a hen bullfinch. How are my hawk, my ferrets, Kitty's bullfinch, and the dogs getting on? Last Wednesday I shot five birds; they were the bullfinch, the water-wagtail, a long-tailed tit, a hedge-sparrow, and a cole-tit. We are having quite fine weather now, but very cold. Sometimes my hands get so numb from doing nothing that I can hardly hold my catapult. They did yesterday, but I managed

to kill two all the same. I should like to be able to kill a kingfisher, but I am afraid there is not much chance of it, as they are so timid. We had to do our essay examination yesterday. Our term had to do the last fifty years of modern history, that is, from 1820 to 1875. I have not got into a single row of any sort since you left. It was beastly rot, I found when I got back on Monday that I might have stayed longer.—Your loving son,

EDWARD A. BAIRD.

XXIII.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Plymouth, *Thursday, 5th Feb.* 1885.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We came round yesterday morning at about 12.30 a.m. from Spithead, where we have been lying for some time, putting off the starting every day, for different reasons. We most likely go to-morrow. Halsey and I got leave yesterday for the whole day, and we went to Dartmouth to see Halsey's brother on the *Britannia.* We lunched at Torquay, where we met an old friend of father's whose name was Captain Herbert. He said he knew Uncle John particularly well. I expect this will be the last letter I shall be able to write to you, if we start to-morrow. Yesterday we dined at Captain Bainbridge's house, and I met a lady there who knew grandpapa very well, but I couldn't find out her

name. I lost my purse with seven or eight pounds in it yesterday, but I saw the inspector about it at Plymouth, and telegraphed to Captain Bainbridge about it, asking him to have a look for it, and this morning I got a telegram from him to say that he had just found it. I have just written to him to send it to father, if he has not already sent it on to me. Will you send it out to Madeira to me? and don't change it into paper, as they won't take bank-notes out there, except in English places. Will you thank Lady Normanton for that watch-chain for me? as I really have not time to write more. Give my love to all the others, and to father, if I do not send him a letter. How are Jumbo and the old mother ferret getting on? Also Judy, Nelly, and the hawk. I was rather sick coming from Portsmouth the day before yesterday. It is 120 miles, and we did it in about thirteen hours. I may possibly be able to send them a letter all round, and I will if I can. It is beastly rot, we have to keep night-watches now. This ship does not roll much, but she pitches terribly at the least thing, which is worse. Don't forget to let me have some letters at Madeira. The places we stop at are: Madeira, St Vincent, Monte Video, Sandy Point in the Straits of Magellan, where we meet Uncle John; and Coquimbo is our destination.—Your loving son,

EDWARD A. BAIRD.

XXIV.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Madeira, *16th February* 1885.

My dear Mother,—I was awfully sick the first three days at sea, but I am better now. We expect to get to Madeira on Monday, so I have dated my letter for then. On our second day at sea, a gale came on which went on for a day and a half, and it was awful. There is an awfully jolly chap on board who is a retired chaplain. He is acting as chaplain here till we get out to Monte Video. His name is Mr Gilbert, and he says that he hasn't seen you since you were a little girl, but that his aunt knows you quite well. I was in his cabin yesterday for some time, and he has promised that when we get to St Vincent he will lend me a gun, and take me out shooting with him. It is an awfully jolly little gun, not quite so big as the one I generally use. He has got several thousand cartridges, and I have loaded about 4000 of them for him. He has got a little rifle very much like mine. When I get to Madeira, if I can get leave to go ashore, I am going to hire a horse and go for a ride round the island. It has come on a good strong breeze to-day, and we are going much faster. I am still getting on very well with the Captain, and have not got into any rows yet. Did you get all my letters the other day, and were the girls pleased with them? I am expecting a whole budget when I get to Madeira, so I hope I shall not be disappointed. I got your letter just before I left

Plymouth. It does seem so funny changing so suddenly from cold to hot, like we have. There were some clothes which I told Frazer & Davis about, just before we left, and which had not come aboard. Will you write and tell him that I have found them? They were given to a Lieutenant Fisher on board. I wrote again to Mr Aldous about the card just before we left, and I hope he has sent it to you. I expect I shall be sick again when it gets rough, as I only got better as it became calmer last time. We are having awfully bad weather now, but I haven't been sick again. There is no chance of our getting to Madeira on Monday, as it is Wednesday now, and I don't expect we get there till Saturday, if this weather goes on. On Tuesday night it blew a hurricane. It was one of these circular storms which keep on changing their direction. It went on for about three hours blowing as hard as it is possible to blow. I do believe I have got over my sea-sickness, as I was not a bit bad. I am getting quite used to the sea, and should not much care if we did not get to Madeira for another fortnight. We got to Madeira on Friday evening, but on Saturday morning a rash came out on my face and all, and I was in bed till Wednesday morning.* I had no chance of finishing this letter, as I was in my hammock the whole time, and we sailed on Wednesday morning. It was an awful disappointment to me not being able to go ashore, as I had been counting on a ride when I got there, and there are beautiful horses there. Besides that, it looked an awfully jolly

* He had measles.

place from what I saw of it. I got your two letters, and I see that you have got that card. Mr Fane came aboard the ship, and he came and spoke to me. Mr Gilbert knew Mr Fane very well. We are at sea again now, with every prospect of being so for some time. We have not had much bad weather, but the Captain intends to steam as little as possible on account of the coal. We were just a fortnight getting from Plymouth to Madeira. There is a heavy swell now, but it is not blowing much. We are having beautiful weather now, and the Captain thinks that we shall very likely get to Monte Video in a week or ten days. I breakfasted with the Captain this morning, with a fellow named Sykes; he gave us a jolly good breakfast. I expect we shall begin wearing white ducks soon, as the weather is very hot. Mr Fane said he would write to you from Madeira and tell you why I had not written. The Captain does not think that we shall meet Uncle John at Sandy Point, as he doesn't think he will take the trouble to come right down there, just to go right up again. I am so sorry that Kitty has been so bad, but I hope she is better now. I am going to send some things that they make at Madeira. I don't know what they call them, but I will ask Mr Gilbert. I asked him to get me a few things to send home, as I couldn't go and get them myself, and he got these, and now he won't let me pay for them, so they are more presents from him than from me. He is only coming with us as far as Monte Video after all, and then he is going to take a mail steamer to Vancouver's Island, where he is going to wait till we come up. We

have not seen any rarer sea-birds yet than gulls, but on the day of our leaving Madeira we saw a whale spouting, and the porpoises have been jumping out of the water all round the ship this morning. I am still on the sick list, which is rather a good thing for me, as I do not have to do any duty. We have got to St Vincent in rather less than seven days. We had beautiful weather coming here, and we went about nine miles an hour, under sail most of the time.—Your loving son,

EDWARD A. BAIRD.

P.S.—Mr Gilbert caught a dolphin the day before yesterday.

XXV.

H.M.S. *Triumph.* Received *19th March* 1885.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have very little time to write. I shot a very rare bird, a kind of plover, also a raven, and a quail here (St Vincent). The only other person who shot anything was Captain Broad, the Staff Commander, who shot two quail. Lots of the other midshipmen and some of the lieutenants went out shooting, but none of them got anything. Most of them could not stand the heat on the plains, and my face is cracked all over, and most awfully sore from the heat. Mr Gilbert says that my bird is awfully rare, and that he has never seen one like it before. I am going to get it skinned. We are just leaving St Vincent now.

It is dreadful about Gordon, although we know very little about it. My face is covered with vaseline now, which is very uncomfortable. I got your letters to Monte Video just now. I have written to Mum.—Your loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

It was an awful pity missing the rabbit-shooting.

XXVI.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Monte Video, *3rd April* 1885.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We have just got to Monte Video. We met a steamer coming from here, who told us we were at war with Russia, and just as we got here we learnt that the peace was concluded. We were just a month coming from St Vincent here, and we had very good weather. It was frightfully hot crossing the Line, but we saw no sharks. The Captain looked awfully angry when he heard that peace was concluded. We were having beautiful weather at sea, but as soon as we got into harbour we had horrible dirty weather. Mr Gilbert is going to leave us to-day. That rare bird I got at St Vincent has gradually fallen to pieces, and gone overboard. We are not allowed to have extra money a year, but all the fellows who have friends out there are going to be supplied by them, and their parents supply the friends. I think it would be rather a good dodge to ask Uncle John to give

me a little occasionally. We don't have a penny out of our pay scarcely, however careful we may be. To-day is Good Friday, and I expect we shall stop here for Easter Sunday. We did not have any games while we were crossing the Line, as the Captain would not allow it. He has been awful jolly to me, and has lent me a whole series of hunting books—Sponge's *Sporting Tour*, *Handley's Cross*, *Ask Mamma*, etc. The First Lieutenant is the officer I like best in the ship. We had cleared everything away for action, but now we have to put everything back.—Your loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

XXVII.

H.M.S. *Triumph*.

Sandy Point, *24th April* 1885.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—My hands are so cold I can hardly write. The First Lieutenant is a fine chap; he took me out shooting at Monte Video, and I shot eleven partridges. Here, at Sandy Point, the Commander lent me his dog, which is a splendid setter, and I shot a woodcock. The only other person who shot anything here was the Staff Commander, who shot one snipe. There is scarcely anything at all to shoot here. The First Lieutenant says he wants to pay back on me all that Uncle John has done for him; he was with Uncle John for four years in different ships, and Uncle John used to go out shooting with him very often. We

are leaving Sandy Point to-day. Coming from Monte Video to here we had a frightful Cape storm, which came on suddenly and lasted for eight hours. In the middle of it there was a fire on board, in the lamp room, but we put it out with water. The Captain looked awfully pale when he heard of it, but he gave his orders with perfect presence of mind. That poor little dog of the Captain's had a dreadful fit here, and foamed at the mouth, and howled, and was dreadfully bad. I hope all the others are all right. It is winter down here and very cold, but I suppose it is your summer? In that storm we had a lot of the waves seemed as if they must come right over the ship, they seemed to be hanging over our heads. We have not met Uncle John yet, but we meet him at Coquimbo. When we were at Monte Video the First Lieutenant lent me his gun. The place he took me shooting to was about forty miles inland. He paid for my ticket, which was 12s., and also for my food, and carriage, and everything. The other day the Commander let me use my rifle from the ship, and I shot a diver at about fifty yards, only I couldn't get a boat to pick him up. The naval instructor is on board now, and we can never get ashore till the afternoon. How is father getting on? Also how are Judy, Nelly, the old mother ferret, and Jumbo? Mr Gilbert left us at Monte Video, and I missed him very much at first, but now the First Lieutenant makes up for him. I shall be glad when we meet Uncle John. I have been looking after Forward and Diver as much as I can, will you tell father? but Diver is utterly spoilt through the sailors

throwing him things to fetch, and then tearing them out of his mouth, instead of doing it gently; but I soon managed to make Forward know me, and I have kept her all right, so that her mouth is as soft as when she started. The Admiral lost his best dog, which was the spaniel named Nell, which Uncle David gave him. She died having pups.—Your loving son, EDWARD A. BAIRD.

XXVIII.

H.M.S. *Triumph.* Coquimbo, 18*th May* 1885.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have just got your letter dated 21st March. We have met Uncle John, and we have been staying here for over a fortnight. Uncle John is awfully jolly to me. I have been to breakfast with him three times, and out for a walk twice. I went shooting the other day with Douglas, and we each shot three snipe out of nine we saw altogether. I think I told you I shot a woodcock at Sandy Point. Tell Kate that we have not met the *Constance* yet, but will most likely meet her at Vancouver. Uncle John lends me a gun whenever I want it; it is a very nice one. He also lends me his dogs. I went out with a fellow named Gordon to-day, and to shoot a moor-hen with our rifles, and he, like a fool, went and wounded a tame goat. We were both taken up, and we got our shooting stopped for the remainder of the time we are here, which is an awful bother, as I shall not be able to shoot anything more for some time. I

have just this moment got your letter, dated 27th March. It is an awfully good thing getting the Argyll Fund, and I am just going to show your letter to Uncle John. Mr Patey must have been very kind to Helena. I am glad to hear that the ferrets are all right. I had to pay sixpence for your last letter, because you only put a penny stamp on it. We have great difficulty in getting stamps at all here. We made a good passage here from Sandy Point, for although it was rough the whole time, the wind was in our favour. Give my love to father and all the others, also to Frank and Brightman. I am very sorry Frank has had such trouble.—Your loving son, EDWARD BAIRD.

XXIX.

H.M.S. *Triumph*. Coquimbo, *20th May* 1885.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have got back my leave and my shooting, and the other day I shot a pigeon. They are well known about here to be the hardest birds to shoot that there are, because they fly very fast and are very wild. A flock of five got up more than seventy yards away, and I fired at the nearest one and knocked him over. There is a paper-chase on horseback to-morrow, and Uncle John has hired me a horse. He has got a horse of his own, which stays on shore when we are in harbour, and comes aboard when we go to sea. Uncle John is going to ride him with the paper-chase. We are

still at Coquimbo. I have not got a penny left. I have had three dozen of my clothes washed, and I have about five dozen left dirty, which I can't get washed, as I have no money. The washing here is a dollar and a half per dozen, and in all other places it is two dollars. Everything is the same price, handkerchiefs and all. There is an awfully nice fellow on board the *Swiftsure*, named Ogilvy, and he and I are great chums. He is awfully fond of shooting, and has shot a lot of things up at Vancouver's. Last Saturday I started at six in the morning and kept walking till six in the evening, and after all only got that pigeon. I have not shot any more snipe yet, but I am going away again at six to-morrow morning with Ogilvy, to try and get one or two, and then be back in time for the paper-chase. They are turning two large merchant steamers into men-of-war, so that is why we don't go north, as Uncle John wants to see it done. One of them is twice as long as us, and goes eighteen miles an hour. She has just come over from New Zealand, which is 8000 miles, in 22 days. I have been made a signal midshipman, together with three others, and when I am on watch I have to walk up and down the poop with a telescope under my arm, so I think myself a bit of a boss. The mail is just going to start, so I must shut up.—Your loving son, EDWARD A. BAIRD.

XXX.

H.M.S. *Triumph*. [illegible] *th* [illegible] 1885.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We have just come up from Valparaiso, where we went down for a week's [illegible]. We are going north-eastward and [illegible] to at San Francisco, which is about 5000 miles [illegible] on the 15th of next month as [illegible] going [illegible] be relieved there. I must [illegible] with the Staff Surgeon and I shall have [illegible] three pictures while I am about [illegible] two pictures. While we were at [illegible] mind us going in the harbour [illegible] and [illegible] and we had [illegible] Valparaiso [illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible] me [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

XXXI

H.M.S. *Triumph* *Payta, 20th July 1888.*

MY DEAR FATHER, I wrote to you at Coquimbo, but the letter did not catch the mail. We are now at Payta, which is a horrible place. We [illegible] up full speed from Coquimbo. Payta is [illegible] the Line, and is frightfully hot. I am very pleased with myself, as I have [illegible] in the gun-room, and am getting [illegible] I have shot forty-one birds since I [illegible] will give you a list:—St Vincent, 1; [illegible] Monte Video, 11 partridges; Sandy Point, 1 woodcock; Coquimbo, 12 pigeons, 2 partridges, 1 snipe, 2 plover; Valpara[illegible] When I come back I [illegible] you are. I am going shooting at [illegible] We get there [illegible] can get leave. It [illegible] but there is rather a good place for [illegible] ten miles inland. [illegible] have shot anything [illegible] ately. It goes bad in less than an hour. I [illegible] think [illegible] about giving me any money, as I did not ask him. The only way to send money [illegible] and in that you lose about 5s. on the pound. This is a horrid place, [illegible] Head, and the plate is full of sand. Adam Bogle told me. I believe [illegible] a gun and cartridges. He has been awfully kind to me. When we were at Coquimbo we had [illegible]

out for paper-chases on horseback, and he used to hire a horse for me, which cost about 12s. He did that two or three times. I am awfully sorry he is going. I wonder what sort of chap Sir Michael Seymour is? I suppose you don't know him? The only ones who have shot more than me in the ship are the Staff Commander and First Lieutenant. Uncle John has only been out shooting once since he has been in this ship. I have made chums with a fellow called Smith, who is an assistant paymaster, and is a jolly good chap. He joined this ship at the same time as Uncle John did; he came out with Uncle John, but he is going to stop with us when Uncle John goes home. He is Uncle John's secretary's assistant. Have you still got Olive? or have you got rid of her? Douglas has got an awfully good gun, which cost between £30 and £40. He has, altogether, shot a duck and eight snipe. I almost lost Douglas's gun once. I was wading through a marsh after snipe; one got up which I shot, and I was in too much of a hurry to get to it, and suddenly found myself up to my neck in mud. I found I was sinking deeper, so I shied the gun to a drier place and managed to scramble out, but that finished my shooting for that day. Before I got out I got a lot of slimy beastly muck in my mouth, which was unpleasant. I just wiped the gun with my handkerchief, and hauled out the cartridges, which was a pretty tough job, and went straight back. I sent all I shot at Valparaiso in for Uncle John's dinner, and I sent some snipe in another time. I am blowed if I haven't written you a nice long letter.—Your loving son, EDWARD BAIRD.

XXXII.

H.M.S. *Triumph.* Payta, *20th July* 1885.

My dear Mother,—I am so sorry about poor Harry, as I liked him so much. It seems very sudden, as he seemed perfectly well when I saw him last. I forgot to tell father in my letter that the rifle is all right; will you tell him so? Since Madeira I have not been ill in any way once, and I am perfectly well now. Did you get my letter in which I told you that my face became one huge blister, from the heat at St Vincent, and that I had to go about for a fortnight with my face covered with vaseline? It is a great pity that poor Judy died, as she was such a nice old dog. Uncle John's dogs have not been of much use to him. I can't write you a very long letter this time, as I am going to write to the remainder of the pack! We have come up from Coquimbo full speed, and are making the best of our way to San Francisco. Tell father that I am to make him take me out shooting with the shooting parties when I get home. I suppose you will read father's letter, where you will find most of the news. This is an awful station for a swell; wherever you go, whether in harbour or at sea, you roll backwards and forwards so much that we generally have to keep the gun-room ports shut. We have just had a sea on now, which has flooded the mess, and the wretched fellows who were underneath have gone down to shift. It is awfully stuffy now that the ports are shut. I don't know whether I have told you about

it before, but the worst thing here is about the drink. The water is nearly always bad, so that we have to drink beer when we can get it, and that is 9d. a bottle, but that very seldom lasts a week after we get to sea, and when that is finished we have to take wine, which, besides not quenching our thirst, costs more than we can afford. Again, we can't get anything to eat at sea unless you pay extra for it, except at dinner, when you get a little meat. I used to think we were awfully badly fed on board the *Britannia*, but I wish we were as well fed as that now.—Your loving son,

EDWARD A. BAIRD.

P.S.—Will you give my love to Brightman?

XXXIII.

H.M.S. *Triumph*.

San Francisco, *20th Aug.* 1885.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I got that ten pounds by Sir Michael Seymour. Thank you very much. I was rather hard up, as you see I don't get nearly as much as a midshipman. I get about a pound less a month. When I have paid my servant and all the messing money, I only have about ten shillings over, which I have to get my washing done with. I am sending you and Mum two Japanese things by Uncle John. I forgot to put any names on them, so that you will have to look sharp after them, or Uncle John will forget. I went to see Uncle John off the day before yesterday. He has

left ten pounds with Sir Michael Seymour for me, if I get hard up, but I shall be a midshipman next month, so I will only want it if I want to buy any extra thing very particularly. I went out here to try and shoot a deer the other day, but I didn't see one. I took a Winchester repeating rifle with me which Uncle John gave to the First Lieutenant, who says he will lend it me whenever I want it. If I had only had three days, the people about here said I should have been almost certain of a shot or two. Uncle John has left me a gun and 500 cartridges, also a pair of brown shoes for shooting in hot weather, and a pair of black shoes. He bought me a duck-call here, which he says is a very good thing for duck-shooting. The gun he has given me was bought in 1864, so it is sure to be a good one. It was an old pin-fire gun, but he has had it turned into a central-fire gun. Since we have left England I have shot thirty-five brace of game, while all the rest of the gunroom put together have shot twenty-eight brace. At San Diego, a place where we stopped for two days on our way up here, Uncle John took me out shooting with a large party, and I shot eight brace of Californian quails, two couple of hares, and a couple of rabbits. There were seven guns altogether: Uncle John, Captain Rose, Captain Simpson and a professional shooter from on shore, and the Vice-Consul and myself. The whole bag of quails was 157, so I was not much behind the average, and I got more than my share of rabbits and hares. I have no more time now.—Your loving son, EDWARD BAIRD.

P.S.—My love to Mum and all the girls.

XXXIV.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Esquimalt, *27th Sept.* 1885.

My dear Mother,—I am afraid I have been a bad boy and not written for some time, nearly a month. I have been shooting every hour I have been able to get away, except when I went up to see Mr Gilbert, who is staying in the town here. I have bought a rifle for four pounds ten shillings, and whenever I can get a whole day I go up country deer-shooting. I have seen several deer, but have only twice had a shot. One I hit very hard, but not having a dog I could not track him through the thick. In this island there is nothing but very thick trees and undergrowth wherever you go, except when a place is cleared by fire, or on the top of the mountains, where there are sometimes open glades. It is on the top of the mountains that I find the deer. It is pretty hard work climbing the mountains, but I generally (when I can get a day) start about 3.30 in the morning before it is light, and get up in the mountains by sunrise. That is the best time to find the deer, as they are out feeding in the open glades, and I stalk up to them through the thick stuff. Most of the people about here when they go deer-shooting take a large pack of dogs with them, and they stand down at the nearest water and shoot the deer as the dogs drive them down, but that is what I call butchery, as they kill from ten to twenty deer in a day that way. My rifle is an American one, and I can fire sixteen shots one after another without taking it from my

shoulder, by just moving my left hand backwards and forwards. It is what they call a "Colt's repeater." It is sighted up to three hundred yards, and when I tried it at a target I made pretty good shooting with it. The deer about here are dreadfully wild, but I intend to bring back one or two heads for all that. Since I left England I have shot fifty brace of birds. Has father had any shooting lately? The duck are beginning to come in now, and I hope to have good sport then. I intend when they are all down to go out every morning at four and bring back a duck or perhaps two before eight o'clock, so as to be in time for study. I had quite an adventure to-day, or in other words I nearly drowned myself. I was out sailing near the mouth of the harbour with another fellow about three years older than me; we were sailing along with the wind on one side of the boat, and I was sitting right up on the side the wind was coming. It was blowing pretty hard, and the sea was rough, when all of a sudden the wind shifted over to the opposite side of the boat, and I had not time to shift before the boat capsized and would have fallen on the top of me, but I put my feet on the opposite side and shoved myself clear. As it was, an oar fell on me and shoved me right under water. The other fellow, who was in the middle of the boat, had no difficulty in slipping round and getting on to the bottom of the boat, but I had to swim back to her, which I found pretty hard, with all my clothes and my boots on. The other fellow ought to have held out something to help me, but he didn't, and it's a wonder I wasn't drowned. He just gave me

a hand up on to the bottom of the boat, and when we got aboard told everyone he had saved my life. Soon after we had got up on the bottom of the boat another boat saw us, and came and picked us up, but we were half dead with cold, as the water was freezing. I changed all my clothes, and am all right again now. When we were coming up from San Francisco we had very bad weather and took about twice as long as we should have if it had been calm. I do hope to get a few deer before I leave here, and perhaps a bear. Tell father he must get Uncle David to ask me out deer and grouse shooting up at his place in Scotland when I come back.—Good-bye, from your loving son, EDWARD BAIRD.

P.S.—Did the girls get all their letters? I hope Uncle John gave you and father the Japanese presents.

XXXV.

H.M.S. *Triumph.* Esquimalt, 1*st Nov.* 1885.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We are going to stop up here for six months, as our engines are not safe. I have not managed to get a deer yet. A gentleman has asked me to go with him for a week's deer and bear shooting up the country, but I am afraid I shall not be able to get leave. I am not sure whether I told you that I did very well in the examination. I went deer-shooting yesterday, but I saw no deer, although I shot a grouse with my rifle. Tell father I have shot a lot of grouse and quail since I have been here.

I must begin again here, as I got my seven days' leave, and was so excited that I forgot all about the letters. I went out and I killed three deer, a buck and two does. I leave you to imagine how pleased I was. I have just had a letter from father, and I am very sorry to hear that you have been ill. I hope you will be all right soon. The First Lieutenant has gone for ten days' duck-shooting over to the mainland. I hope he will get a good many ducks. I saw no signs of bear when I went out the other day, but I just caught a glimpse of what they call in this country a panther. It is an animal about the size and shape of a tiger, but the colour of a lion, and it's really a kind of puma. Dear old Mum, I hope you will be better soon. How are all the girls getting on? I hear father has had good sport up in Scotland. Five of the midshipmen on board here have been sent to the Flying Squadron. Good-bye, dear old Mum.—From your loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

XXXVI.

H.M.S. *Triumph.* Esquimalt, 16*th Nov.* 1885.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I managed to get leave for seven days, and so I walked twenty-seven miles inland, with one suit of clothes on my back, and took my rifle with fifty cartridges. I met the gentleman who had asked me out there, and he gave me some blankets to roll down in. The next day I shot a large buck, the second day I shot a large doe, the third day I got nothing, the fifth day

I got another doe, and the next day I walked back with the skin and head of my buck. The buck weighed 150 lbs., the first doe 100 lbs., the second doe 75 lbs. I should have got another very large buck, which was the only standing shot I got, only the cartridge was bad and would not go off, and before I could get another shot he was gone. It was such a beautifully easy shot, only about seventy yards off, and I felt so perfectly certain of him, so that I can tell you I felt a bit sick when I saw him go. The fellow who keeps all our wine stores, and in fact our mess caterer, has suddenly been found out in spending altogether £250 instead of paying it to those who supply us with food and wine. He is an assistant paymaster, and will most likely get two years' imprisonment, and be dismissed the service with disgrace, for fraud and embezzlement. We shall have to live on salt pork and ship's biscuit, and none too much of that either, till we can manage to make it good out of our pay, which will be in about nine months' time. I shall have to do all I can, while we are in harbour, to get venison and ducks to feed the mess on. I was dreadfully sorry to hear Mum was ill. I hope she is getting strong again now. When I get home I must get some rabbit-shooting on those moors. I hope Uncle John did not hurt himself much when the cab capsized. I did not tell Mum about that fraud and embezzlement case, as I did not think she would understand, but I daresay you will explain about it.—Your loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

P.S.—Will you send on my letter to Uncle John as I don't know his address?

XXXVII.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Esquimalt, *Sunday, 22nd Nov.* 1885.

My dear Father,—I have had my deer's head stuffed, and it is the biggest that anyone in this ship has killed yet. Next time you see Uncle John you must ask him to write to me. Yesterday I had another very narrow escape. I have got an Indian canoe; they are very light flat-bottomed things, made out of cedar-wood. Well, yesterday it had been blowing hard outside the harbour, and there was a big swell running in, with large breakers on the beach where I wanted to land, which was the opposite side of the harbour to where I was, so that I had to go right across the mouth, where there was a heavy sea running, though I did not know it till I got there. When I got to about the middle of the harbour's mouth a strong wind was blowing astern of me. It was very rough, but I did not mind that, as I was pretty safe so long as I kept broadside on to the swell, as the boat was so light. When I got nearer the other side I saw these great big breakers on the beach, and did not know what to do. I could not go further into the harbour, as if I had tried to do so I should have got the swell astern, and most likely been swamped with a sea over the stern. I could not go back the way I came, as, besides being very risky turning, it is almost impossible to drive the canoe against a strong wind, as they have no hold on the water, so that the wind blows them back as fast as you can

paddle along. I did not want to go out to sea, as it was much rougher there, so I resolved to go on, and try and rush through the breakers. I ran her along on the top of a big wave, till it broke on the beach, and then I jumped out into the surf, which was about up to my knees, with the intention of getting to her bow and hauling her up out of the surf. Before I could do this the next wave caught her and swung her round against me, and knocked me over, and then the boat was washed round on top of me, so that I was jammed underneath her with the waves washing over me, and with every chance of having to stop there till I was drowned. However, by exerting all my strength, I managed to scramble out and regain my feet, and, seizing my gun and cartridges, I clambered up on the beach. I put them down, and waited a minute till I could get my wind, and then went and got hold of the boat, which was already full of water, with the top part of both sides split off. I managed to haul her up a little way. Then a boy happened to come down, and he helped me to empty her out and haul her up on to the beach. I then took off my boots and emptied the water out of them, and went out shooting, but got nothing.

My deer's head cost five dollars to have stuffed, which is equal to one pound English money. The deer had a beautiful skin, much larger and softer than they usually are, and I am having it cured, which will cost about the same money. When it is done, I am going to give it to the First Lieutenant as a present, because he has been so awfully kind to me always. Last Tuesday afternoon I left the

ship at three, and at four I returned with two splendid mallard drakes, each of them as big as an ordinary wild goose. I just had the luck to get a fair shot at a flock, and I bowled one over with my right barrel, and the other with my left. Did not Uncle David give you any grouse-shooting when you went up there? Is Uncle John any the worse for his accident? or is he all right again? Give him my chin-chin, and tell him I will write again soon. Give my best love to Mum and the girls, and write and tell me when Mum is quite well again.—Good-bye, from your loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

XXXVIII.

H.M.S. *Triumph.* Esquimalt, *23rd Dec.* 1885.

MY DEAR FATHER,—Thank you very much for that fiver. It is a most extraordinary thing what can have become of all my letters. Since the 15th of October I have written four letters to you, and three letters for you to send on to Uncle John, and you don't appear to have received any of them. Write and tell me as soon as possible whether you have got them, as I have lots to tell you; also Uncle John will think that I have forgotten to write to him, and I promised him I would. Amongst other things I have to tell you, which I wrote about some time ago, was that I went for a week's shooting and got three deer, the first of which was a large buck. I hope you will get a good price for Olive and the

brown horse. I am fetching in lots of ducks now, which is a good thing, as we are on ship's grub. The First Lieutenant is still most awfully good to me, and looks after me properly. He takes me out shooting when he can, and has me in to dine or lunch with him every now and then. I hope you have been having some shooting. I see by the papers that Uncle John will be promoted in January, but I don't suppose he will shift out of that billet. Next time you see him, you must tell him how well the First Lieutenant has been looking after me. I am very glad to hear that Mum is getting strong again. Write as soon as possible, and tell me whether you have got those letters.—Your loving son, EDWARD BAIRD.

P.S.—Thank the girls very much for all their letters, and tell them that I will see if I cannot write a letter to each of them one of these days.

XXXIX.

H.M.S. *Triumph.* Esquimalt, *3rd Feb.* 1886.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have had a letter from Uncle John, and he says that Mum is much better, which I am very glad to hear. I have just had a letter from Mum, and it appears that you have not had a letter thanking you for that five pounds. I am sure some of my letters must be lost on the way. The other day, when the frost broke up, we had a very bad day, snowing, hailing, raining, and blowing

all day. I went out shooting for the day, and brought back 6 ducks, 2 teal, and 2 quail. It was the best day that I have had here. In Mum's letter she said you were staying at Woodborough. How are my friends there? I can just remember some of them, but not their names, as it was so long ago that you took me there. I remember the rook's nest, and the boy who helped me, and I remember getting lost, and that's about all. The day before yesterday I had the most unlucky day that I have had since I have been here. I started at six in the morning and tramped till night, and only had one snap-shot at a quail, which I could not find. A most extraordinary thing happened the other day when I was out shooting. I shot a large mallard drake, which flew for about a hundred yards and then fell on the ice. About five minutes afterwards a huge great white-headed eagle came sailing round and made a couple of swoops at it, and the third time he settled and picked up the mallard in his claws, and soared up and flew right away with it over the trees. I wish he had come over me, and I would have shot him, and got the mallard into the bargain. The ice would not bear, or else I should have run across and stopped the eagle's little game. It is very bad news to hear that my old mother ferret is dead, as she was the best I ever had. Give my love to Mum and all the others. Uncle John has sent me a five-pound note; I have put it away, as I have plenty of money at present.—Your loving son, EDWARD BAIRD.

P.S.—Tell Mum I am going to write her a long letter as soon as there is any news.

XL.

H.M.S. *Triumph*. Esquimalt, *20th Feb.* 1886.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am going to write you a long letter, as I have not written to you for some time, but carried on my correspondence with father. The shooting season is nearly over, and there are only a few ducks left. The deer-shooting was over on the 10th of last month, and the grouse-shooting at the end of the month. We have been having very cold weather here, and sometimes waiting about in the swamps it has been terribly cold. One night, particularly, was awful. I got down to the swamps just as it was getting dusk, and the ice on them was half an inch thick, so that it just wouldn't bear. It was snowing and freezing hard, and I stood in there for about half an hour with the water and ice about six inches above my knees. After half an hour I shot two ducks of a flock coming in, and one of them only had a broken wing, so that I had to chase him about among the ice, and by the time I caught him my legs were almost cut to pieces by the ice. Since then the First Lieutenant won't let me go down in the swamps without my wearing one of his pairs of wading boots, which are india-rubber, and keep the water out. They come up to the hips, so they are very good things. I am pretty well off in the way of clothes but my boots are the things which bother me. My feet have grown to an enormous length, so that I can't get any of my old boots on. My feet are about half an inch longer than anyone's else on board, and are still growing fast. I have bought two new pairs of boots since I have been out here, but they

can't make decent ones, and are enormously dear. Those shooting-boots I started with, which were too large for me, I had to discard six months ago, because they were so short that one of my big-toe nails came off, and the other was very far gone. I could not make out what it was that was the matter with my feet, but after the nail came off my toe was tender, and I noticed how short the boot was. This is awfully sickening about my old mother ferret dying, but I am glad it was at home and not at some keeper's, as then I should be afraid she had not been treated properly. Give my love to all the girls, and thank them for all their letters; also give my love to Brightman. It's awful rot, all these people up at Victoria keep on asking me to go up to balls, and dinners, and things of that sort. I never intend to go to one if I can help it, as it doesn't suit me at all. Everyone else goes almost, except the First Lieutenant, so they expect me to go. I am expected to go to a dance next Thursday, but I am going to send a decided refusal, without if I can help it being rude, so perhaps they won't ask me again. Our engines are very nearly finished now, so that we shall soon go out for our trial trip. We expect to go down to Honolulu about the end of March. It is one of the islands down in the tropics. From all accounts the horses are very cheap there, so I shall go out riding. The Admiral wants to be up here again in July, so I don't suppose we shall stop long there. I have shot no more deer since I got those three, nor have I seen a bear. I must stop now, as I am going to write to Uncle John.—Your loving son, EDWARD BAIRD.

XLI.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Esquimalt, *9th March* 1886.

My dear Mother,—I have just received your letter dated 15th Feb. I do not think it is my fault about the letters not coming regularly, but I have noticed the same thing with yours and father's letters, so I think the post is not by any means regular. We went out on our trial trip the other day, and the engines worked all right, and we are going out to-morrow and Thursday target firing. That is always an awful bother, as the guns make such a tremendous row that you nearly always have a headache in the evening. We shall probably leave here on the 1st of April. I am glad to hear that Helena is enjoying herself in London. I hope father had good sport after the ducks when he went out. After all, I think that is the best fun on the whole. I saw in the papers that Uncle John dined with the Prince of Wales the other day, but I suppose he thought it an awful bother. I will do as you say about writing to the girls, and begin at the eldest and work right down to the youngest. The shooting is all over now, and I have got my rod and flies all ready, to go and catch the wily trout. I have heard terrible yarns about the riots in London. I hope it is not so bad as the papers make out. I wrote to Uncle John the other day. Give my love to father, grandpapa and all the girls, and Boy; also to Brightman. I went out for the last time the other day and killed two ducks.—Your loving son,

Edward A. Baird.

XLII.

H.M.S. *Triumph*.

Esquimalt, 30*th March* 1886.

My dear Mother,—We are soon going to leave here now; the day is fixed for next Saturday. We did have some very cold weather some time ago, but it has come out quite fine the last few days, and I have been trying the trout-fishing in the lakes. I went out the other day, and got eight nice trout with a fly. Another day I got two large perch with a worm, but of course that is not so much fun. The First Lieutenant has caught several trout, and now he has gone for three days' fishing with the Captain in a good fishing lake about thirty miles from here. The First Lieutenant is very fond of fishing; in fact, he likes it better than shooting. It is Alice's turn for a letter now, so that I suppose she will be expecting one. When we leave here we are going down to Honolulu, but we shall stop on the way at San Francisco, so you had better address your letters to the Pacific station. The ship looks very smart now, as she is all fresh painted, and with the sun shining on the white paint, with plenty of trees all round for a background, she looks very well. I expect, however, we shall be all rusty when we get down to Honolulu, especially if we have any bad weather. There is supposed to be very good riding at Honolulu, so that I expect I shall use up my money in hiring horses. I changed my last five-pound note to-day to buy necessary eatables, as we shall be more than a month at sea, but I have got some besides that is in Admiral Seymour's

charge, which Uncle John left for me. I am living in the First Lieutenant's cabin while he is away, which is very jolly. I always live there when he is away. One thing I do find runs you out of your money very fast here, and that is you have to pay a shilling for a waterman's boat every time you go ashore, or come aboard. I find that in the last two months I have got through twenty-five shillings. You can sometimes get a ship's boat, but not very often, so you can understand it comes pretty dear. I had a letter from Bob Davy the other day. His cousin "Kidd," as he calls him, was invalided home on account of deafness; he was a lieutenant in this ship. I must finish, as I have two or three letters to write. Good-bye, dear old Mum.—Your loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

XLIII.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Esquimalt, *Wednesday*, 31*st March* 1886.

MY DEAR FATHER,—You must excuse bad writing, as I am in a rare hurry. I hope you are having good luck with the horses. We are going to sea in three days' time from now (Saturday), so I am laying in a little stock of provisions for the voyage down to Honolulu. We shall be five weeks at sea, and as we shall get nothing but salt beef, salt pork, and ship's biscuit, I expect I shall want something. Does Nelly kill many rats now? or is she getting too fat to run? I have sent a letter

to Mum which young Davy sent me. Write and tell me when Kitty gets as tall as you. Remember me to the Normantons whenever you see or write to them. The girls tell me in their letter that they expect to ride Brownie's colt soon. What sort of pony has he turned out? I hear from Mum that you had a grand day's duck-shooting before the end of the season. I have been out trout-fishing in the lakes now several times, and I have got quite a good hand at throwing a fly. I got eight trout with a fly one day that I went out. I remember Uncle Ashley used to let me try throwing a fly with his rod in the Avon, but I did not make much of a fist at it. I suppose you will have Uncle John staying with you before long, to get fishing there. The First Lieutenant has been for four days fishing with the Captain, and has got several fine trout. There is supposed to be very good riding at Honolulu, so that I am rather afraid I shall spend all my money in hiring horses, as after all riding is the best sport of the lot. I have no time for more.—From your loving son, EDWARD BAIRD.

XLIV.

H.M.S. *Triumph*.

San Francisco, *Sunday*, 10*th April* 1886.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We are at San Francisco now. I found two letters from you waiting here for me, one addressed to San Francisco and the other to Pacific station. Everything is dreadfully dear here. I went ashore the other day and bought

two uniform ties, also two plain-clothes ties, for which I had to pay ten shillings. They were just ordinary ties which you tie up yourself. I also bought a fishing line which cost nine shillings, so that is nineteen shillings straight off. I was thinking of getting photographed here, as several fellows have, but they are thirteen shillings a dozen, small size. Has father been fishing lately? or hasn't he got time? We had rather a rough passage coming down here, and several fellows were sea-sick, but I am glad to say I was not. From all your letters you seem to be having dreadfully cold weather in England. We are going to leave here on Saturday the 16th, and are going down to Honolulu straight. What did Helena think of stopping so long in London? This is a horrible harbour, as there is such a strong tide, and if you want to go ashore when there is no ship's boat going you have to pay four shillings, and if between sunset and sunrise it is twelve shillings. It is an awful bother, as the ship's boat only goes ashore three times a day, one of which is 11.30 at night. I have no time for more, as I must write to Kitty. Good-bye, dear old Mum, and give my love to father.—Your loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

XLV.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

San Francisco, *Monday, 19th April* 1886.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am afraid I shall not be able to write to Mary, as we are just going to leave

here, and it is doubtful whether this will be in time. I have just had a five-pound note from you and father. Thanks so much for it. I have not spent any of it here, but it will allow me some rides at Honolulu, which will be very nice. They have just got in the boats, and are going to get up anchor directly. We have been here ten days. The first week was horrible weather; it did nothing but rain the whole time, and it gets fine just as we are going away, which is a pity. I have been ashore three times here. I did not want to go more, as there was nothing to do except spend money on things you don't want, which may be all very pleasant while it lasts, but is a ing one soon gets tired of. The First Lieutenant is as good to me as ever. Ask grandpapa if he got that letter from me before we left Esquimalt. Tell him I should very much like a letter from him if he can find time. We shall be between a fortnight and three weeks going to Honolulu. Not one of us could eat the pork we got coming down, so most of us went without meat at all, except those who brought bacon, of which I was one. Have no time for more. Good-bye, dear old Mum.—From your loving son, NED.

P.S.—Tell Mary I will write to her as soon as we get to Honolulu; also thank father for the fiver. I have been photographed as you asked me, but shall not get the photographs till I get to Honolulu, whither they will be sent after me.

XLVI.

H.M.S. *Triumph.* Honolulu, *5th May* 1886.

My dear Mother,—We arrived here five days ago. It is an awfully hot place, but there is a good lot of green stuff, which is a great thing. The riding is not so good as it was supposed to be, as you have to pay ten shillings an afternoon for a horse. I did have one ride here to-day, and I went a good distance. There is one place here where you ride for about eight miles up a valley, and then after a bit the road is cut through the rock, when it takes a sharp turning and you find yourself on the edge of a precipice 3000 feet in height. I rode out there and looked over the edge and saw a tremendous lot of flat country with a volcano in the middle and the sea out beyond. It was a splendid view. About thirty miles from here is a volcano with the largest crater in the world. The whole island is made by volcanic agency, and there are lots of extinct volcanoes all over the island. It was very rough when we left San Francisco, and most of us were very sea-sick, me among them. I have not been at all well lately, but am better now. I had bad headaches, also sore throat and cold. I went ashore to-day, and feel all the better for it. The First Lieutenant has had a letter from Uncle John, who seems to be having some fishing in Ireland. I cannot write any more to-night, as I am so sleepy, but I will go on to-morrow, and will write to Kitty, as I believe it is her turn for a letter.

6th.—We are lying a dreadful distance off the

shore here, as there is a coral reef runs all round the island, which this ship cannot cross. It's an awful bother being so far off, as it is so hard to get a boat. It is beautiful weather here, though rather hot. I hope to be able to go ashore again to-day. There are five new midshipmen coming here this morning, so there will be a squash in the mess again. I told them to send six photographs on here. I hope it will be enough, as I promised one to the First Lieutenant, and I should like to give one to a farmer who was very civil to me on my shooting and fishing excursions up at Esquimalt. He used always to give me a good square meal when I stopped there, and when I went in on my way back he used to give me a basket of fresh eggs to take home. His house was about eight miles from Esquimalt out in the woods. This letter will very likely not leave here till the 10th, as the mails are few and far between. I must write to Kitty now. Good-bye.—From your loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

XLVII.

H.M.S. *Triumph.* Esquimalt, *27th July* 1886.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,—I am afraid you will be dreadfully angry with me for not having written for so long. I am afraid it is nearly a month. I have had a tremendous lot to do since then, and I will tell you all about it. About a week after I

sent those photographs, and just as I was beginning to think of writing again, Mr Gilbert came back from Australia, where he has been staying, and came aboard the ship to see the Commander and me, and then he asked me to come out for a fortnight's fishing with him. After some difficulty I got leave, and went up to the hotel where he was staying with my rifle and fishing gear and a bag with a few clothes in it. The party consisted of Mr Gilbert and his sister-in-law, with her chaperon, a gentleman named Mr Calvert, and myself. We started early next morning by steamer and went to a place named Courichan, where we stopped the night. The next morning we hired two heavy wagons, as it was a very bad road, and started for Courichan Lake, which was about twenty-five miles distant. All the party and the baggage came on in the wagon, while I walked on ahead to see if I could get a deer on the way. I saw one deer, but did not kill it, as it was a very long shot and I only saw a part of its head. It rained hard all day without stopping once. When I got to the lake I found a settler's hut at the near end, and he asked me to come in and wait for the wagon. They came up in two or three hours' time, and then the settler asked us all to stay at his hut while we were at the lake, which we very gladly did, as it would have been very wet for pitching our tents. I went out early next morning while the others were still in bed, and brought back several fine trout. In the afternoon Mr Gilbert and Mr Calvert went out fishing, and I went out to try and get a deer as we were hard up for fresh meat. I did not see a deer,

and they only got two or three small fish. It was very showery all that day. The next day Mr Gilbert and I went out fishing for the whole day, and got thirty or forty fine fish. It was quite fine that day. Next day the whole party went out fishing except me, and I started at five to try and get a deer. Before eight o'clock I had killed a fine doe, and then I went and joined the fishing party. We had some of the doe for lunch and it was very good. That was our best day on the lake. We got forty-five trout, weighing altogether 90 lbs., and the deer. I shot two young Great Northern divers with my rifle. The next day it rained incessantly. In the afternoon Mr Gilbert and Mr Calvert and I went out fishing, and got fifteen or twenty trout, but not very large. Next day it rained till two o'clock and then came out fine. We went out to try for salmon, which had come up with the rain, and we got three big ones, one of 17 lbs., the others 13 and 11. The next day we started our journey down the river. We went down about ten miles in our canoes, with two Indians in each canoe. Those canoes are wonderful boats. While going down the river we shot over waterfalls and rapids with the greatest ease. The first day going down the river, Mr Gilbert and I got some fine salmon trout, running up to three and four pounds, which we got with a large white fly. After we had gone about ten miles down, we pitched our tents, made a fire, cooked our dinner, and camped for the night. The next morning we started down the river again, but our canoe and those in it had a very narrow escape of being

smashed up. We had to go over a very rocky rapid, through which there was only a narrow passage where the water rushed through with tremendous force, and just below the rapid there was a waterfall some twenty or thirty feet high. Just as we passed the rapid, in trying to run the canoe ashore, by an unlucky accident both the Indians' poles slipped on the rocky ground at the same moment, and the canoe was washed to the very edge of the fall, but the Indians got their poles in the bottom again and by a tremendous effort managed to force her back and get ashore. In so doing we got the canoe half full of water. They had to take all the luggage out of the canoes at that fall and lower them over it with ropes, as it would have been certain death to try and shoot it. It was the biggest fall in the river. We went down about fifteen miles that day, but scarcely fished at all, as we had very rough work the whole day, having several nasty falls to shoot. We camped again about six, and I went out with Mr Calvert to try and get a deer. We had not been gone about five minutes, working about one hundred yards from each other, when I saw a big buck and shot him. We cut him open, cleaned out his inside, and by 6.30 we had him in camp, and at seven we were eating him. The same evening one of the Indians got a small buck, which they ate in their camp. Next day we got to the inn where we had slept on our way out, and stayed there one night. Next morning we went down to the sea in the canoes and tried for salmon in Courichan harbour, but with no luck. Went on board the

steamer at twelve, and got back to Esquimalt that evening, having had the most enjoyable trip I ever had. The next day our examinations began, and have lasted a fortnight, and are just over now. I have done pretty well, having gone up eighty-three marks since last exam. We are having a week's holiday now after the exam., but they will not allow us away for more than one day at a time. When I got back from my trip I found that Mr Hutchinson,* the First Lieutenant, had just been promoted to Commander, and now he has gone home, which is a great pity for me. The best time for you to invite him down to Nea House will be in October, if father can get him some shooting then, as he says his father would not like him to go away in September, as he wants him to shoot grouse. His address is Egglestone Hall, Darlington. When you write to him you must be sure and address him as Captain Hutchinson. Before he went he gave me several suits of shooting-clothes, which I am having altered to fit me. He also gave me a good pair of shooting-boots, but I find them rather small. We have been having rough weather for the last few days, and I have been having some narrow shaves in my Indian canoe, but I can swim, so it is all right. I am going to try and get leave to bring her home on board this ship, as she would be the very thing for the Avon, though I doubt if the girls would be able to go in her alone, as she is very rickety for those who do not understand her, though for those who do she is the safest boat imaginable. Good-bye.—From your very loving son, EDWARD BAIRD.

* Now Admiral Hutchinson.

XLVIII.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Esquimalt, Sunday, 15*th August* 1886.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have been very unlucky since I wrote last. I had my chest broken into and three pounds stolen; and I was out in the woods, and somehow my watch got hooked out of my pocket by a branch and I never saw it again. Yesterday I caught three salmon, and three days ago I caught two more, so I have not done badly in the fishing way. One of the salmon I caught yesterday weighed seven pounds, and he wetted me through when I got him alongside my canoe, with his struggling and splashing. I sold the rifle I had the other day, and bought a new one for the same price which I like better, as it does not get out of order so quickly. I tried it the other day and cut a crane's neck in two at two hundred yards, which I don't call bad shooting. I am going to write to Captain Hutchinson to-day. I wonder how he is getting on. We are going down south in the beginning of October, and are going to sail for three weeks in a fleet, which will be an awful bother, as there is much more work. I expect Alice has been having good times staying with Aunt Alice and Bi. I hope father will get some shooting this season, and I daresay he will get Captain Hutchinson some in October. He hates society of all sorts, so you must not introduce him to any people, as I don't expect he would care for it much. If Lord Normanton is not afraid of his frightening the ducks,

and it is not too late in the season, you must ask father to get him some fishing in the Avon, as he likes fishing much better than shooting, *i.e.* salmon and trout, not pike-fishing. I am sure you will all like him awfully, as he is the nicest man I know. You must have had fine times at the Stud House, I wish I had been there. I should have liked going with Uncle Charlie and shooting fawns from horseback. I have no time for more, as it's past ten o'clock. Good-bye.—From your very loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

P.S.—Thank you so much for *King Solomon's Mines*; it is the nicest book I have read for a long time. The Admiral and two or three officers also had it sent out by their friends.

XLIX.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Esquimalt, 14*th October* 1886.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am afraid it is an awfully long time since I wrote last, but I will try and make up for it with a good long letter. I have been in bed for some time with an abscess on my leg, and the doctor made a cut in it about a quarter-inch deep, with a sharp hooked knife, and it hurt like anything at the time. A man had the same thing done to him a short time ago, and fainted, so it shows it is pretty objectionable. I hope all the others and you are well. I have heard from

Captain Hutchinson, and I am sorry to hear that he cannot go for some time. You must make him come and stay with you in November, if he can't this month, as I am sure you will be pleased with him when you do know him. We are going to any amount of new places down south, so that I hope to get some shooting in some of the places. Remember me to Brightman, Gregory, and Thomas. We are having beastly wet weather now, but I mean to see if I can't get a deer before we go. I shall have a whole day off on Saturday. I am not looking forward to the time when we shall be at sea and keeping night-watches again. I am afraid I have been awfully bad about letters lately, but I will try and do better in future. We have got a young bear on board as ship's pet, and he is great fun; we have had him nearly a month. There is also a tame deer, which the Captain brought on board the day before yesterday. He bought it somewhere. The *King Solomon's Mines* which you sent me is an awfully good book, and I have read it three or four times. I have just received that pair of gloves, which will be very useful in the night-watches. Thank you very much for them. Remember me to the Normantons next time you see them; also give my love to grandpapa, Uncle John, and any of the other uncles and aunts that you may happen to see. Give my love to all the girls, and tell Helena that I will write from San Francisco, as I have no time now. There was a dance given on board the other day, but I kept out of it, although I had to bring a lot of people off in one of the cutters. I wish we could stop here

another winter, but the Admiral seems to like the summer best up here. He is very kind to me, and never passes without speaking to me. I am getting on very well with X., now. Good-bye.—From your very loving son, EDWARD BAIRD.

L.

H.M.S. *Triumph.* At sea, undated, received *19th January* 1887.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am going to write you a tremendous long letter for Christmas, though I am afraid it will arrive rather late. We left San Francisco the day after I wrote my last letter, and had a smooth passage down to San Diego. The Admiral asked me to go out shooting with him for a whole day. We started about seven in the morning, and drove to a place about twenty miles from the town, where we got some splendid quail shooting, and we got eighty between us. There were the Admiral, the Flag-Lieutenant, an assistant-paymaster named Smith, and the guide. I got twenty off my own gun, so I beat the average. The Flag-Lieutenant got most, which was twenty-three, and the Admiral got twenty. The next place we went to was Magdalena Bay, but I could not get ashore there. Several people went shooting, but only got a few snipe of sorts. It was a wonderful place for shells, I believe. I bought a few from a boat alongside, just as a curiosity. After Magdalena Bay we went to Mazatlan, which was a very

nice place, but fearfully hot. I went ashore there, got a guide, and went shooting with three others. The guide took us to some swamps about two miles from the town, where there were any amount of coots and a few duck. We waded in and shot a lot of coots, and I got a couple of duck. After a time we went to another swamp, as we had frightened away most of the birds from the one we were in, and began working, about up to our arm-pits the whole time, so we had to carry our cartridges in our hats. After we had been there about an hour, we were working along between a fence, with just the top showing above water, and some bushes growing out of the water. We were rather deeper than usual, as the water was up to our shoulders, and were carrying our guns over our heads. I was first, and the others were following on in single file, when suddenly between me and the next fellow just behind me, an alligator about five feet long nipped over the top of the fence that was showing above water, with a horrible splash and snort. He was evidently a young one, and afraid of us, but anyway it put us in a beastly funk. We all clambered up on the fence, and began trying to climb along it so as to get out of the swamp as quickly as possible. We had to go very slow, as the fence was rotten and very shaky. After going on about ten minutes, we suddenly heard a splashing sound in the bushes within ten yards of us, and there we saw another great brute, covered with mud, and about fifteen feet long, or more. If the beggar had seen us he would have had us for certain, as we were up to our ankles on

the top of the fence. After we had gone on a good bit, and were well away from the big one, we jumped off the fence, and found the water only about up to our waists, so we waded ashore as quickly as we could, and you may be very sure that we did not go into that place again. After we got back to the town we heard that only a week ago a man had been taken under, in those marshes, and been killed. Also that pigs and sheep were constantly disappearing there. That old and young one were the only ones that had been seen there, and were supposed to be the only ones. That is how we found out their sizes, as we were much too excited to measure their lengths when we saw them. It was a funny thing, the Flag-Lieutenant had told me before we went, in a joking way, that there were sure to be alligators in the swamps, and as we were going along by this fence we heard the guides shouting out something to us from the bank, and I said to one of the other fellows, just to try and frighten them, "Perhaps it's an alligator; there are lots here," and no sooner had I said it, than the little one appeared. I was very glad when we were all out of it. I tried overboard for a shark at Mazatlan, but did not catch one. They are very hard to catch, as salt pork is not a very good bait, and that is all you can get on board ship. You fix about three pounds of meat on a shark hook, then secure a rope on to the hook and put it over the stern. After we left Mazatlan, we came on to Acapulco, where I suppose you remember I had been before. It is a most beautiful little harbour,

but supposed to be the hottest in the world, because it is perfectly land-locked, so that no wind can get in. I went shooting there, but only got two parrots, which I skinned. We stopped there four days, and took in coal, which is very dirty work. After we left Acapulco we came on to San José, which is a splendid place for fish, and I caught a lot alongside. I went out shooting one afternoon, but did not get anything. The next day I got two days' leave, and started at six in the morning on mule-back, and rode out to a saw-mill about fifteen miles up country. I had to hire a guide as well as the mules, as there was only a narrow path the whole way out there. The mules went at a slow jog the whole way out there, which was uncomfortable, as I had to carry my rifle in one hand. The owner of the saw-mill was a Mr Shaw, who very kindly put us up and fed us while we were there. We went out shooting that afternoon, and I shot a beast they called a coon. It was a fierce-looking brute about three feet long and eighteen inches high, and climbed about the trees like a monkey. He was swinging on a branch by his tail when I saw him, and he was just clambering up the branch when I shot him. I only took his great long tail, as he was full of insects. We came across two tracks of wild hogs, two or three of deer, and on of what they call out here a tiger, but which is really a large sort of jaguar, with a beautiful skin. These same jaguars are an awful pest in the neighbourhood, as they kill the oxen which stray into the bush, and an ox out here is valuable, as they are the only things they use for drawing

carts. I went out about four the next morning, and got to the shooting place by daylight. I was with one of the native Indians. We had each to take a great double-edged sword, to cut our way through the vines and brush, as it was so thick. We followed up five separate tracks of tiger, but could not come up with them. We put up a herd of wild hogs ahead of us, but the brush was too thick for us to see them. We also came across the tracks of some deer which had crossed a stream not more than a few minutes before us, as the mud had not yet settled. The wild hogs are the most dangerous things here, as if you don't shoot the hindermost one the whole herd turns and attacks you, and unless there is a handy tree to climb you may consider yourself a dead man. On the way back I saw a most beautiful parrot, which I shot with my rifle, but which spoilt him so much that I could only keep his head, one wing, and his tail. They are supposed to be the most beautiful birds in the known world. We saw lots of wild turkeys, but they are very hard to get near, and I did not get a shot. I wanted to get a tiger very much, but I had to start back at ten o'clock that day, and did not get a chance. On the way back I saw an iguana on the branch of a large hollow tree, but he was gone before I could shoot him. It was like a lizard, about three or four feet long, with black and white rings round him. I also saw two or three large, light grey-coloured squirrels. If I had had a shot-gun with me I could have shot hundreds of pigeons. I found when I got back that they had killed a shark. They had covered

a tin of gun-cotton connected with electric wires with salt pork, and hung it overboard by the wires. Then when the shark came to smell the pork they pressed a small firing key, and blew the shark's head right off. I may be able to send home my deer's head, and one or two curios that I have collected, so that they will do for a Christmas present. There are one or two wings that will do for trimming hats. I have some shells, a couple of Indian curios, a Sandwich Island fish-hook, a little maple sugar, which you will find very good eating, the head of a sea bird I shot, the skin of a green parrot, the skin of a long-tailed bird which they call a blue jay, the wing, tail, and head of that beautiful bird I got at San José, the skin of a mallard drake filled out with cotton wool, and the tail of the coon. Also the breast of a grebe, and a rusty old bayonet picked up on the battlefield of Arica in Peru.

I forgot to tell you tha when we were out in the woods at San José we were shown a kind of vine, which has the nicest water in it that I have ever tasted. If you cut off a piece about three feet long, it would fill an ordinary hand-basin with water. I have not been ashore since San José, so there is not much to tell you. We stopped for a few hours at La Libertad and La Union, also for three days at Punta Arenas, where we painted ship, ready to meet the fleet at Panama. Last night we fired at a target, using the electric light to show where the target was. We are going to do the same to-night. We get into Panama on Saturday, and then we shall be distributed among

the small ships, most likely for the next month. We shall have plenty of hard work then. We are rather later than we intended to be, so that I am afraid we shall be at sea on Christmas Day, so that it will be just like an ordinary Sunday, and we shall not even be able to get a piece of fresh meat to celebrate it with. One or two other things I am sending you are a grass hammock, which you will find very comfortable in hot weather, and a couple of resurrection plants, which you must put in a saucer of water, in the sun, and they will resurrect in about ten minutes. I may also be able to send a few pineapples, but do not count on them, as I may not be able to get them. I am going to send the box home by the *Humber*. I am afraid I cannot send it right through, so that if father could get Mr Grant, or somebody, to look out for it, it would be a great advantage. The Sandwich Island fish-hook is made of mother-of-pearl, with some sort of grass secured to it for bait. I have just had a letter from you saying you are going to send me a box, for which many thanks.

We are now at Panama with the fleet, and I am going to be sent to the *Conquest* for the cruise, which will be about six weeks. I can only manage to send you three pineapples, as they cost too much, as this is not the right season. If they are not ripe when you get them, put them in the green-house, or else put them in a hot room, and they will soon get ripe. They are ripe when they are yellow. If you sling that grass hammock low down, you will find it very easy to get into, and it is very comfortable to lie in on a hot summer's

day. I hope the box will fetch up, although I am not quite certain that I am sending it right. It is frightfully hot where we are now. I did envy you when you said in your last letter what cold weather you were having. There are two shells which I had not time to finish polishing, so send them as they are. I am sure this is a very nice long letter. Good-bye, dear old Mum, from—Your very loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD
(Panama).

(*Note.*—The box arrived safely, but the heat had melted the maple sugar, and the pineapples had gone bad.)

LI.

H.M.S. *Conquest.* Panama, *27th Jan.* 1887.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I don't think we are going where the cholera is after all, unless it comes up here. We are about one hundred miles north of it at present, and I believe we are not going further south. We must stop here about a month for all the ships to coal and provision, also to refit. I am still on board the *Conquest*, and get on very well. I have not been able to do much shooting since I got that condor, which was a glorious bird. At Arica, a place which we stopped at, there was a tremendous high cliff over which in the Chili-Peruvian war several thousand Peruvians were chucked over, and you could see the poor beggars' bones and clothes in the inaccessible parts of the cliff. There is a stone on the top of the cliff where

the Peruvian general tried to jump his horse over the cliff, but as the horse refused the jump he turned him round and backed him over. That cliff is where the old bayonet I sent you came from. It is almost impossible to get mails now till we get up north again, as we are shut in from the south by cholera and from the north by yellow fever, which has appeared at Guayaquil. I have been riding three times since we have been here, and have been all over the country. I hope everyone is well at home? Give my love to father and all the others, also to Uncle John. I am trying to learn a little Spanish. We bathe overboard every morning now. Ask father to write again to Mr Hutchinson, as I am sure you would like to have him staying with you. I was not able to go to the bull-fight at Lima, as I had watch to keep on the day that it came off; but I went up another day, and saw the cathedral, which is a very fine place, full of images of sorts. I have not time for more. Good-bye, dear old Mum.—From your very loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

LII.

H.M.S. *Conquest*.

Coquimbo, *5th February* 1887.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have been spending all my money since I have been here on riding, as you can get some very good horses. I tell you two or three things which I want you, if possible, to send out,

and I will send you my measurements. The things I want are a cloth short-jacket for Sundays, a low waistcoat to go with the jacket, also a suit of plain clothes, and a pair of boots to wear with my uniform on board ship. There has been a Russian corvette in here the last few days, and I must say that everything is done much better by them than on board the English men-of-war. The men are better paid and fed as well as better drilled, and the officers are nice, friendly sort of fellows who can, most of them, talk English; and all, men and everyone, can talk French perfectly. The ship is beautifully fitted up and is kept wonderfully clean. There are also two American men-of-war in the harbour, very ugly, useless-looking ships. Altogether there are eleven men-of-war, seven of which are English. Have you got that box of mine yet that was sent from Panama, or has not the *Humber* got home yet? I have not been doing much shooting lately, though I got a few pigeons one day. We have just received the first mail for a month, but there is no letter for me. This letter will not be posted till the eleventh, as there is only one mail a fortnight. We bathe overboard every morning now, which is nice. I am going to write to Uncle John by this mail and tell him everything that there is to tell. I must also write to Captain Hutchinson and ask him his reason in writing why he did not go and stay with you. There was another friend that I made up north, but I am not quite sure whether I told you about him. His name and address: C. E. Lyon, Johnson Hall, Eccleshall. He is in England now, so you might

ask father to be civil to him if he should come across him. He was going to take me out on a shooting expedition, only the ship sailed before he could get away. He gave me a whole lot of fishing gear. He was a thorough sportsman and very good to me in every way. This cholera has spoilt all our plans about going south, which is a great pity, as there is very good shooting to be had south of this. It seems very funny to hear you in your letters complaining of the cold, whilst we are being simply broiled. We shall have a very long sea trip going north, as we shall not be allowed in any of the Peruvian ports for fear we should have the cholera on board, and then we shall have to skip out all the ports where the yellow fever is for fear we should catch it on board, as it is very infectious. They have a most primitive way here of threshing the corn. They fence a circular piece of ground, then fill the place up with corn, and then drive a lot of horses into it and make them gallop round and round on the top of the corn till it is all broken up. Then they drive the horses out again, and clear away all the straw with pitchforks, which of course leaves the corn at the bottom. Then they sift it with great big sieves. There was a donkey race the other day up at a place called Campania, given especially for the benefit of the midshipmen. All the donkeys were supplied, and we had to ride them bare-backed with nothing but a halter and a single rope attached to it, which cuts your hands dreadfully. The donkeys were all wild, just driven in from the country. A fellow named Reeves had a donkey which ran away with him, and went

straight for the winning post, and when he got there stopped short, and sent poor Reeves flying over his head. However, he won the race, and so pocketed two pounds, which was very good. There was a sub-lieutenant there, who is always coming out an awful swell, and this time he came in a most perfect pair of riding pants and top-boots and spurs. He got on a donkey, and went for a short distance all right, but suddenly he happened to prick him with his spurs, when the beast ran away as hard as he could go, without the fellow being able to stop him, as he had no bit in his mouth. Suddenly he came to a big muddy hole with about four feet of muddy water in it; directly the donkey got to the edge of this hole, he stopped short, and the wretched sub-lieutenant went head over heels into the pool, and came out in an awful state, amidst the jeers of the bystanders. I came off two or three times myself, but did not hurt myself, although the rope cut my hands like anything. I have just received a letter from you dated Dec. 12th, with five pounds in it. Thanks very much, dear old Mum, and please thank father for me as well. You seem to think I was going to get it by Christmas, and it is now Feb. 8th. I must end up now, as I have got to write to Uncle John and Mr Hutchinson. Good-bye.—From your very loving son, EDWARD BAIRD.

LIII.

To Admiral Sir J. K. E. Baird, K.C.B.

Panama, *25th Feb.* 1887.

DEAR UNCLE JOHN,—I am afraid I have not written for a tremendous time, but hope you will forgive me. How did you enjoy the Jubilee? I saw that you distinguished yourself. I think it must have been rather fun. I have not done much shooting down the coast, although I had some good duck- and snipe-shooting at Onazatlan with the Flag-Lieutenant, Mr Thynne. However, at the last place, San José, I got three days' leave, and went to a place about fifteen miles off. The jungle was awfully thick, and I had to use a short sword to cut my way through, as all the bushes and trees were bound together by vines. I got so sick of this after about an hour, that, like an ass, on coming to the bed of a stream I burst through the last clump of vines with a crash, and fell on my knees in the stream. On looking round, I saw what I afterwards found was a tapir, a beast about the size of a cow, with a long snout. About three hours later I shot a big doe, which I had hard work to pack in the hot sun. The next day an Indian who was with me said he saw a tiger, which was quite possible, as we had seen some tracks. We also distinctly heard some peccary, but from the thickness of the jungle we could not see them. The total bag was: one wild turkey, which weighed fifteen pounds, four wood-pigeons, and one doe, which weighed eighty pounds, a I got it back without the head or guts. We have had great changes here lately. Captain

Simpson and Dr Trevan have invalided home; one sub-lieutenant has been made acting lieutenant; the other has gone to the *Conquest*, instead of Mr Martin, who has invalided; Mr Dick has been made acting commander; we have a new midshipman; and a lieutenant, by name Smith Dorrien, is taking passage for the *Espiègle*. Our ship's-steward's boy, a little fellow barely sixteen, broke his leg badly at San José the other day, by getting it jammed between two trucks when ashore after beef. It had to be amputated, and he died the other day when they were dressing it. He was buried ashore here. I hope you will write me a line when you have got time. We are not going to Galapagos Island, but are going straight down to Callao. They have got another attack of cholera along the Chilian and Peruvian coast. The only places we know for certain it is at are Lima, Coquimbo, and Valparaiso, and we are going to all three. Good-bye.—From your very affectionate nephew, E. A. BAIRD.

LIV.

H.M.S. *Conquest*. Coquimbo, *22nd Feb.* 1887.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We are going to leave this place to-morrow, and very sorry I shall be to go, as the best of the shooting is just coming on, and we shall just miss the golden plover shooting, which is a great pity, as that is splendid sport. I send my measurements for those things I told you of by this letter; I sent the size of my foot in the last.

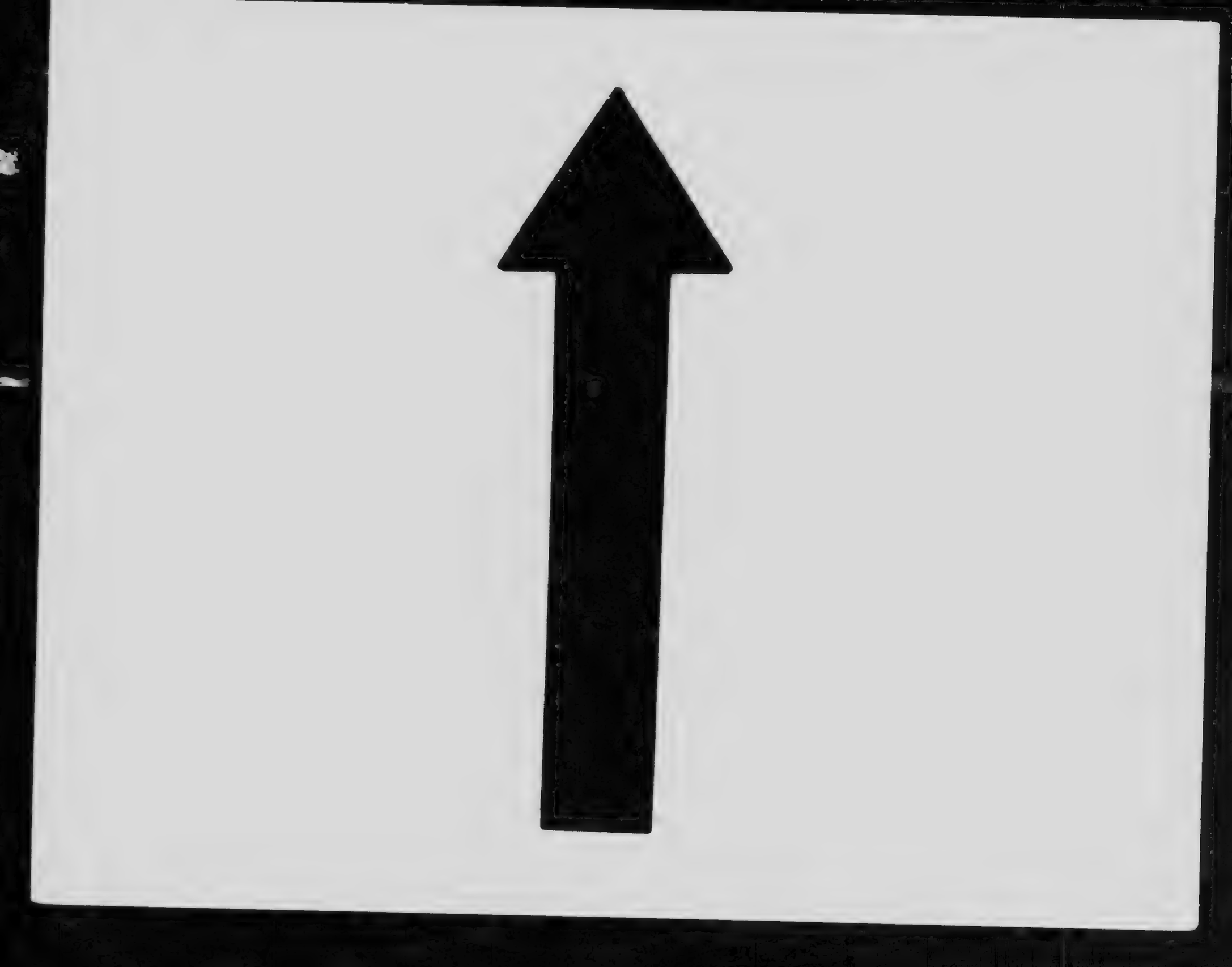
We shall be twenty days at sea when we leave here, as we are going right away up to the Galapagos, not being allowed into Callao, and not wishing to touch at the places where there is yellow fever. I have just had a letter from you asking me to write to Uncle John. I wrote to him by the last mail. I have been riding a good deal here, but lately I have mostly been shooting. There was a fleet regatta here the other day, which caused a little excitement. There are wild buffaloes to be shot up in the Galapagos. We expect to be up at Esquimalt in about seven weeks. Look in the *Field* of about the 8th or 15th January and see if you can find a paragraph from me. Ask father to write to Mr Hutchinson again, and make him come for the fishing this spring, if he is still at home. Give my love to them all, and thank Helena for her letter. Tell them that I will begin writing to them in turn again when we get up north, if they care to get letters from me. I think that this is all I have got to tell you. Will you please send this slip on to Fraser & Davis, and tell them to send the things out as soon as possible. Good-bye, dear old Mum.—From your very loving son, NED.

LV.

H.M.S. *Conquest.*

Coquimbo to Galapagos Islands,
8th March 1887.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We have already been a fortnight at sea, and I am getting very tired of it,



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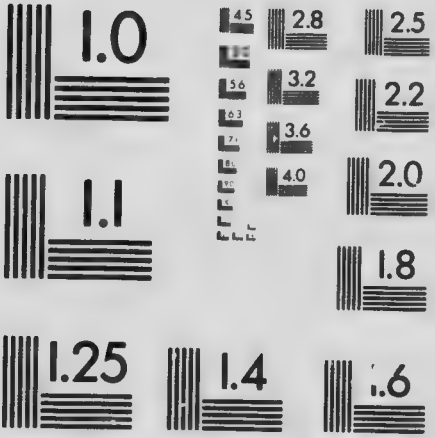

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but we get in in a day or two now. We have had a very good passage altogether, though it is fearfully hot. We are going to anchor at Chatham Island, where there is a small settlement. I am afraid I shall not be able to get away after the wild bulls, as they are right over the other side of the island, and you want two days to go after them.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Galapagos Islands, 18*th March.*

I came aboard this ship the day after we got into Wreck Bay, Chatham Islands. I only managed to get ashore for one afternoon, so did not have a chance of getting a bull, but I got a very fine seal, but as he was only a hair seal his skin was no good. We stopped there for two days, and then went on to Albemarle Island, which is the largest of the group, but entirely uninhabited. We got there on Sunday afternoon, and left the next morning at ten o'clock. The bay where we anchored was named Tagus Cove. It is just the old crater of a volcano broken away on the seaward side, forming a nice little harbour, but surrounded by perpendicular cliffs. However, I and two or three others landed at the foot of them, and after about an hour's climb managed to get over them, and came to a lagoon on the other side. It was in the old crater of another volcano, and when we had clambered down the sides of it, which were very steep, we got to the lagoon, which appeared very deep. We went in and had a bathe, and when we came in deep water it was so salt that it would have been almost impossible to sink—it is a regular Dead Sea.

When you put your head under it makes your eyes, nose, and lips smart like anything. There were some teal on the lagoon, so on Monday morning I and two others landed from 4 to 8 a.m. and shot thirty-two teal, which was not so bad, considering the time; however, the birds were very tame, I suppose because they seldom saw human beings, so we did not have much sport. There were also a lot of those iguanas, but I did not shoot one, as they are loathsome-looking creatures, and only the tail is eatable. Some officers brought a couple on board, but nothing was done with them in the end. Nearly all the officers went out fishing, and there was splendid cod-fishing all round the rocks. On Monday morning the Admiral and Flag-Lieutenant went out, and in about an hour they killed fifteen hundred pounds of fish. The biggest they caught weighed twenty-one and a half pounds. The Admiral caught one weighing about ten pounds, which was a bright yellow, with red fins; he painted it afterwards, and then invited me to breakfast to help him eat it, as I had given him some of my teal. I dined with him that same evening and he gave me a very good dinner.

Acapulco.

We are now at Acapulco, as you see, and been a week doing the trip. I have received letters from you, the last of which says that you have Captain Hutchinson staying with you. I am glad you like him; I knew you would. How many days did you get him to stop? I see by your letter that father has taken to hunting again, but I suppose the season will soon be over now. I wish I was with

him. The only ship we have got with us now is the *Conquest*. We left the remainder at the Galapagos Islands to disperse in different directions. It is very hot in here, as there is not a breath of wind. I am thinking of shooting a few more of those green parrots to-morrow afternoon for their skins. I see that you have got that box of garbage that I sent you. I was very sorry to hear that the pineapples were rotten, as you would have liked them very much. How did the resurrection plants act? You can always, by putting them in the sun, shrivel them up again, if you like. I had not finished polishing those shells, but you can get them done by some one who understands them. I used to sit up till 11.30, night after night, polishing those shells, but I could not get them done in time. Good-bye, dear old Mum.—From your very loving son, E. A. BAIRD.

P.S.—Tell father I am going to send him a long letter from San Francisco.

LVI.

H.M.S. *Triumph*.

San Francisco, *12th April* 1887.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have just had a letter from you saying that you had got my letter from Panama, and that I had said nothing about the box. I am very sorry, but I always thought I had thanked you for it. It was a beautiful box, and I was tremendously glad to get it. They were

very interesting books indeed. It was a capital watch, and I find it goes splendidly. I am very sorry to hear that the things in my box had gone rotten. The last letter I wrote was when we got into Acapulco. The day after I sent it, the Admiral went on a trip up to Mexico, and Captain Rose very kindly asked me to go shooting with him and the Flag-Lieutenant. We started for a lagoon on the other side of the mountains, on mule-back, at about 11 a.m., taking hammocks with us. It was wonderful the way the mules clambered over the mountains, going along the crumbling edge of a precipice without any chance of a slip. We got out to the lagoon by nightfall, and slung our hammocks between the trees. We arranged about getting canoes at four o'clock the next day, and turned in, in the open air, but it was quite warm. The canoes were rather late, but we got away by 4.30, each going one way. I crossed over to the other side of the lagoon, and went along the opposite bank. The lagoon was about fifteen miles long by about three miles broad. We met at the camp at 9.30 a.m., and found that between us we had collected thirty-seven couple of teal, out of which I contributed fifteen couple, which was not so bad. There were hundreds of different sorts of birds, but I had no cartridges to waste on them. We saw a few alligators, but could not get near them. When we got back we lay in our hammocks for a couple of hours to have a rest. Then at twelve o'clock Captain Rose and I started on ahead, with a rifle we had with us, to try and kill an alligator. We had ridden about a quarter

of a mile when suddenly Captain Rose called to me to stop, and pointed out an alligator lying under some bushes at the water's edge, so I took the rifle, and stalked close up to him, and fired at the joint of his shoulder underneath. He rolled over, and then jumped up again, and made for the water at a tremendous pace, but I gave him a bullet in the opposite shoulder (having a repeating rifle), and rolled him over just on the edge of the water. He was about twelve feet long. We walked along among the mangroves which grow all along the edge of the lagoon, and then we sighted another lying close in to the bank, with his great upper jaw sticking up out of the water. Captain Rose crept close up to him without being seen, and fired. It was a beautiful shot, and hit him right in the eye, killing him at once. He was two or three feet longer than mine. They are awful brutes to look at. We had to leave them there, as they are too heavy to carry back, and we had no time to skin them, and even if we had the skins are not much good, and a great weight. One skin weighs about eighty or ninety pounds. We got back to Acapulco late that night, and left there two days afterwards. We then went to Magdalena Bay, and there I sho⁺ half a dozen curlews. Good-bye now. I am going to write a short letter to father.—Your very loving son, E. A. BAIRD.

P.S.—I wrote and thanked you for the £5 directly it came, as I was writing to you when it came.

LVII.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

San Francisco, *12th April* 1887.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I had a fine time at Acapulco, as you will see in my mother's letter. We are now at San Francisco. I think I told you that I lost my old fishing-rod some time ago. I have bought a new one here. It is a splendid rod, and cost 50s. It is one of those American split bamboo rods. I daresay you know them. I intend to do all I can in the way of fishing up north, as I want to get on with throwing a fly. I hear you have been having Mr Hutchinson staying with you; I hope you liked him—in fact, I am sure you must have. I am assistant navigator now, and have to help the Staff Commander, whose name is Captain Broad. Tell Captain Hutchinson that I am composing a long letter to him, with all the news since Coquimbo, which is to be sent as soon as we get up to Esquimalt. Tell him to write out to me and tell me all his news. The ship is coming home next summer, so you must have a horse ready for me. You must get one of those packs of hounds to have their hunting season in the summer for my benefit. Have you done much in the way of slaughtering the ducks? I suppose Captain Hutchinson was too late for that, but he is very fond of fishing. We had a job to get here, as just outside there was such a tremendous sea running that they were afraid we should touch when crossing the bar. I don't think I told Mum in my letter that on going into Wreck Bay, Chatham

Island, the *Conquest* went heavily aground, and scraped all the copper off her bottom. It gave us a regular lift into the air. We leave here to-morrow for Esquimalt, and expect rather a rough passage. Good-bye, dear old father, from—Your very loving son, NED.

LVIII.

H.M.S. *Triumph*. Esquimalt, 10*th May* 1887.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am afraid I have not written for some time. I have been fishing two or three times since we have been here. My first day I caught forty-one trout, all with a fly, the average being from a quarter to half a pound; another day I got twenty-six, and yesterday I got eighteen. I caught one yesterday weighing a pound and a quarter. I caught them all in a lake about fourteen miles from here, which very few people go to, as the only way is to walk. There is a very slight trail, which is rough walking, and hard to find. When I get a whole day, I start at 4 a.m. and generally get to the lake between half-past eight and nine. If this letter is not too late, I should like you to send me Inman's *Nautical Tables*, and a *Nautical Almanac* for 1888. I have just had a letter from Uncle John, and he says that we shall very likely do a four years' commission out here. We are having beautiful weather, though it was very wet when we first came in here. I see in the *Field* that a salmon has been caught in the Avon weighing over forty pounds. I did

not know that Lord Somerton went in for fishing. How do the dachshunds get on? are they pups, or grown up? It was awfully good of Mr Hutchinson to give them. Have you heard from him lately? I had a letter from him the other day, and he appears to have enjoyed himself tremendously, when he was staying with you. I must write to him again soon. We shall be up here now till something like October or November, so we shall have had a good spell altogether. How does Mary get on with the fiddle? I will start with Helena again this time, and write to them all in turn. We had a fearful passage up, and nearly had to put back, only luckily the wind shifted; we had hardly any coal left in the ship. On Jubilee Day there is going to be a sham fight between the blue-jackets and the Victoria Forts. I shall most likely be mounted as captain's A.D.C. I hope I shan't have a very bad horse, as I should think I would stand a chance of being kicked off when the firing commences. I think I have told you most of the news; at least, I can't think of anything more to say. I hope you will excuse the bad writing, as I have written in rather a hurry. Good-bye ' om—Your loving son,

EDWARD A. BAIRD.

LIX.

H.M.S. *Triumph*. Esquimalt, 11*th May* 1887.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have just had a letter from Uncle John, who says we shall most likely

do four years out here, as Sir Michael is going to do three. I should not be very sorry, as then I should get my six weeks' leave in the winter, and should come in for the hunting and shooting, and perhaps a small bit of early fly-fishing. A place I have got my eye on is that piece of swamp out on the moors this side of that picnicking hill, with fir trees on it. I should think I might get some flight shooting there of an evening, and I suppose no one would object much to my going out there. I remember also there used to be snipe out there. You must have a horse for me when I do get my leave. Another consideration is that I shall get eight weeks instead of six if we are out here for four years, as you get a fortnight's leave for every year on a foreign station. I have been catching any amount of fish lately with a fly. You must make Captain Hutchinson come and have another spell with you this summer, for the fishing. Is there going to be much of a Jubilee turn-out where you are? Out here everything is Jubilee; you can scarcely hear a sentence that has not got something about Jubilee in it. On the day before Jubilee there is going to be a regatta; on Jubilee Day there is going to be a sham fight, and a citizen ball that evening. I did not finish this letter the other day. Yesterday I went out again, and caught sixteen trout, so you see I am getting on pretty well with fly-fishing. They say there will be a great lot of salmon this year. I intend to troll for them with the trolling part of my new rod. There are a lot of grouse about this year, so I hope to get some as soon as the season begins.

We are also going to be allowed to shoot cock pheasants for the first month this year. Write me a line soon and tell me how everything goes on. I must get some more deer this season. The Admiral is just off on a fishing trip up to Courishan Lake. Don't I wish I was going! I don't think there is any more to tell. Hoping all are well at home, I remain,—Your loving son, NED.

LX.

H.M.S. *Triumph*. Esquimalt, *8th June* 1887.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We are having awful weather now, rain every day. I have been very lucky in fishing this year, having killed 143 trout, and all with a fly. Scarcely one was under a quarter of a pound, as I threw away the small ones. About a fortnight ago I killed a fifteen-pound salmon on my new rod, from my canoe. He gave me splendid sport, and took me about half an hour to land him, as it is a very light rod for such a large fish. I also killed a four-pounder the same evening. Those are the only salmon I have killed. The largest trout was a pound and a quarter. I took the Admiral out for a day's fishing the other day, but we did not have much luck. There are any amount of wild strawberries this year, and I expect there will be plenty of grouse. I have taken the measurements of my canoe; she is twenty-two feet long by sixteen inches broad, so you can imagine it is rather ticklish work landing a good big salmon in her. She is made of very

thin cedar, and is very light. Has Captain Hutchinson been to see you again, or hasn't he had time? This Jubilee show is an awful bother, as we are always practising for the sham fight. Last Saturday I had to be on board by four o'clock to go and practise for the sham fight, which came rather heavy after a twenty-mile walk across country, as there is plenty of running to be done. I turned out at two o'clock that morning, as I wanted to try and get the morning fishing. I managed to get twenty-one that morning.

9th June.—I did not finish this yesterday, as time ran short. I killed five salmon yesterday on my old rod, which I brought out with me, the largest being five pounds. I also, after half an hour's hard work, got a fish of twenty pounds alongside the canoe, but he bit the gut just before I could gaff him, and escaped with my spoon bait. It was hard after I had had him on so long. I send you a piece of the line that I was using with single gut on the spoon. Good-bye, dear old Mum, from —Your very loving son, E. A. BAIRD.

P.S.—I will write as soon as Jubilee week is over.

LXI.

H.M.S. *Triumph.* Esquimalt, *27th June* 1887.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Jubilee week is over, and I am writing to you according to promise. On Tuesday, the Queen's Birthday, the sham fight came off. It was the hottest day that has been known

here. It was 115 in the sun. Some time after the fight had begun, I had to take up a position and stand there for over three-quarters of an hour, with the sun on my back. I was beginning to feel very sick and bad, when I had to run right over the other side of the field, which was about half a mile. Just as I got to the other side I fainted, and had to be carried off the field, so missed the remainder of the fight. There were about fifty men and officers taken ill that day. I was all right again after about half an hour in the shade, but was not allowed to proceed with my duty. A sub-lieutenant named Mure, in the *Conquest*, a very nice chap, fainted, and did not come to for two hours. Halsey was delirious all night, so altogether we did not feel very patriotic that evening. The next day was the regatta. It was up Victoria Arm. There was a steam tug which towed all the ships' boats round outside from Esquimalt to Victoria Harbour. I was in my canoe, and as it was calm I thought I would go for a sail before I went to see the regatta, so I sailed about six miles outside, when suddenly it came on to blow hard right on shore. I turned her head for Victoria, but long before I got there a heavy sea got up, but I felt pretty safe in the canoe. I shipped a little water, but was all right till I got near the harbour, when I found there was a strong tide running out, and a bad sea. I got in rather a funk when I saw a great sea coming towards me, with the top curling over. I thought it was all over, and laid the paddle in the boat and hung on to her. The sea broke right over me, filling the boat. It also washed the paddle out of

the boat, but I drifted on top of it and picked it up, and made for a little sheltered bay, two hundred yards off. Every sea broke over me after the first, as she was so low in the water; but being so light, she could not sink. I managed to beach her, hauled her up, took off my clothes, and dried them in the sun, and went up to the regatta. I got a tow back at one o'clock that night by the tug. The *Triumph's* boats won nearly all the races. We had a procession of boats after dark, lighted with Chinese lanterns and fireworks of all sorts. I forgot to tell you that on Tuesday night we had illumination of the ships. Each ship had her boats ranged round her, with rockets in them. At the same moment all the ships lit up their blue lights, and the rockets went up from the boats, so that it looked very pretty. The Chinese lanterns were all got up beforehand. There was a man at each yard-arm with the blue lights. I am afraid my drawing is not very easy to understand. We are going to Vancouver on Thursday, where there is going to be a lot more Jubilee show. I will write again after we come back. I send a letter to Alice by this letter. Give my love to father and all the others. Good-bye, from—Your very loving son, NED.

LXII.

Esquimalt Naval Hospital, 23*rd July* 1887.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,—I hope that you will excuse pencil, and also this fiendish writing. I am dreadfully sorry to hear that poor little Di has

broken her arm, and will write her a short note by this, though it's hard work writing in bed with one's left hand. The show went off all right up at Vancouver. There was a sailing and pulling regatta, and procession through the streets, and an illumination in the evening, the same as at Esquimalt. A horrible thing happened the other day. A bluejacket saw my canoe secured at the end of the pier, and thinking, I suppose, that he would like to go for a paddle, he took her, but not knowing how to manage her he got upset, and before help could reach him he got the cramp and was drowned.

The examination took place in the beginning of July. Just after we had finished the last exam. paper, some fellows found a wasp's nest, and asked me to come and blow it up for them. They gave me some powder in a tin box, and I blew up the nest in the ordinary way. I thought I had emptied all the powder out of the tin, as I had turned it upside down, so I went to try and hook up the remainder of the nest with what I thought was the empty tin, when there was a bang, and I was kicking on my back. It turned out that about half the powder had got stuck in the tin, and as I put the mouth of it down, it had blown up. My right hand was dreadfully cut about and blistered. I am now in hospital, having a wretched time, as all the other fellows are having their week's leave. I have got a beastly oily mark over my face, and my hand all bandaged up. My hand was cut by the pieces of the tin, but the cuts are healing now, and I hope to be out of this in less than a week's time. I am sorry to say I went down one place in the exam.

Give my love to father, with very many thanks for the fiver. Good-bye, dear old Mum, from—Your very loving son, NED.

P.S.—I am afraid the oil has leaked through the bandage, making this letter very dirty, but hope you won't be angry.

LXIII.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Esquimalt, *8th August* 1887.

MY DEAR FATHER,—Many thanks for your letter, which I received two days ago. You talk about yourself as being bad at writing, but I am afraid I am worse in writing to you. I have left the hospital now, but am on the sick list again with an abscess, which started on my chin, and has spread over the lower part of my face. The doctor cut it open the day before yesterday; it hurt like anything. He says you often have them after a burn like mine, and this is a very big one. In the three days after I left hospital I managed to get five salmon, two of them ten-pounders. Thank you for your promise of a horse, though I am afraid it will not be the hunting season when I get back, but I hope to get a little shooting. Have you got a good horse of your own now? or don't you ride much? I am very glad to hear that little Di's arm is nearly all right again. Poor Contie must have been terribly frightened when she broke it. We have to keep night-watch now, which is a bother

when you want to get away for the whole day. I shall be glad when the shooting season comes on again, as I have made up my mind to get another deer or two before we leave here. Admiral Heneage is going to relieve this Admiral in October, and then I expect we shall go down south and meet the *Swiftsure* at Coquimbo. I expect when I get home I shall be able to get seven weeks' leave, so as to get a fortnight's leave for every year we are away, and we shall have been away three years and a half. Uncle John seems to have been giving you a high time seeing the Naval Review, etc. It must have been a fine sight, and I should very much have liked to see it. Thanks very much for your offer to send me more money when I want it, but I should be a greedy brute if I asked for more, when you give me so much already. You let me have more than any other fellow in the mess has, except one whose father has got so many millions—I don't know how much. I tried my rifle at a target the other day, to see that I was not too much out of practice, and I made very good shooting. Quite good enough to bring down a deer. They have been building a dock here for some time. It is finished now, and the *Cormorant* has been in. The *Caroline* went in to-day. I am afraid there is no chance of our going in there. It would save the boatman's shilling each time we go ashore or come off. I am writing to Long Kate by this letter. I don't think there is anything more to say, as we are very dull here, so good-bye from—Your very loving son,

NED.

LXIV.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Esquimalt, *3rd September* 1887.

My dear Mother,—When Fraser & Davis sent out my clothes the other day, they apparently forgot all about the cap, as none came, and the Commander has threatened to stop my leave till I get a new one. I also am afraid I must ask for another uniform cloth jacket, waistcoat, and trousers, as the new Admiral who is coming out is dreadfully strict about clothes. I see Fraser & Davis has broken up, so if you want to change outfitters I have found out that Walton is about the best man to go to. The new Admiral is coming out in November, so I hope that you will be able to get my things out in time. Almost every officer in the fleet is writing home for clothes, on account of this new Admiral. I went out shooting yesterday, but only killed one brace of grouse. One wants a dog out here, as it is thick forest all over the island, and the birds lie very close, and it is hard to find them in the thick undergrowth. Did father get any grouse-shooting in August? It must be good fun on the moors. On the way south, at Acapulco, I am going to buy a parroquet, to bring home. They are very nice little birds. They are going to have some Fleet athletic sports at the end of this month, but I shall not go in for them, as I am no good at jumping or running. Did father find any shooting for Captain Hutchinson near you? If so I suppose you see a good lot of him. I have just received the photograph, but I can't say that I

admire it. Father has come out like an Indian. There is nothing to tell you. I am going to have a try after a deer next Saturday. Good-bye from—
Your very loving son, NED.

LXV.

To Admiral Sir J. K. E. Baird, K.C.B.
H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Esquimalt, 10*th October* 1887.

DEAR UNCLE JOHN,—I have just come back from a very jolly trip with Captain Rose, up to Salmon River in the north of the island. We went up by steamer, and picked up four Indians and two canoes on the way. We landed about one o'clock one afternoon, and that same evening got about twenty-five ducks. The next day, on starting up the river, we found that the salmon took a fly, and we had some very good sport, catching seven in about two hours, the biggest of which was fourteen pounds, and the average eleven and a half. After that they stopped taking a fly, and we tried them with a spoon in the deep pools, and found that we could catch them as fast as we liked, but it was not much sport after catching them with a fly. In about a quarter of an hour I killed a twenty- and a twenty-two pounder. We then moved up the river towards our next camping-place. After going about half a mile, Captain Rose suddenly saw the black head of a bear swimming in the water about ten yards from his canoe. He fired both

barrels of No. 5 shot into it, as unluckily his rifle was in the case, but the bear did not mind much. I was some way ahead, but I returned and went to look for him in the bush, but it was thick, and we could not find him. The next day I was shooting with an Indian, when on striking the bank of the river we saw a bear on a log on the opposite side. I took a good steady shot, and was rejoiced to see him kicking on the other side of the log. We tried to wade the river there, but it was too deep and the current too strong, so we went about a quarter of a mile up to where we could cross, but when we got back the bear was gone. However, we did not despair of him, as there was lots of blood about, so we struck into the bush after him. After following the trail for about two hours we got to a steep rocky mountain, which we could barely climb, and the Indian said it was no good going on, as he would creep into some hole. I was very sick at losing him. We caught about forty trout, averaging two pounds. Two days after this, one of our Indians shot an elk. It was a tremendous size, one of its haunches weighed over two hundred pounds, so you can judge what a size the animal was. We then worked down the river again, catching plenty of trout, but shooting nothing. One day Captain Rose fired at a duck, and an old bear who had been hidden behind a bush close to it went away with a "woof, woof" before he could get a shot. We got some more ducks, and Captain Rose got a goose, which latter were very wild. The steamer then called for us and took us back to Victoria. If you have time I hope you will write

me a line. Captain Rose is having the head of the elk stuffed. Good-bye from—Your affectionate nephew, EDWARD BAIRD.

LXVI.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Esquimalt, 31*st October* 1887.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have just received your letter, saying they have sent off my clothes by Mr Thynne. The new Admiral is expected out one week from to-day. Where on earth is Culzean Castle? and where is Hutton-in-the-Forest? and who live at those places? Tell father to write and tell me if he got a deer. I was out the day before yesterday after deer, and I had an awful sell. We were not quite certain where we were, as it was coming on dark, and we were fifteen miles from Esquimalt. There was no road or path within five or six miles, when I saw a fine buck standing on a rock about sixty yards off. I took a steady shot, and knocked him over. We then went towards him as quickly as possible, intending to cut his throat, and come for him next day, when suddenly he staggered to his feet, and went down over the side of the mountain, which was very steep there, and we heard him crashing and tumbling down over the rocks below us. We daren't go down ourselves, as, besides losing what little bearings we had, we should have probably broken our necks into the bargain, as it was coming

on dark, with a thick fog. I was terribly sick at losing him, as of course he would go away and die in some thick swamp, where he would be no use to anybody. I am afraid that we shall soon be leaving here now, when this new man comes. I am dreadfully sorry, but I thought I had sent this letter off, and, thinking that it was about time to write again, I found this in my desk to-day.

18*th Nov.*—We are going to leave here for certain on the 6th of next month. Admiral Heneage does not seem quite so black as was painted, although he certainly is strict about clothes. The new Flag-Lieutenant seems to be a very nice sort of man, and very fond of shooting. How many out of the six roe-deer did father shoot? I heard from Captain Hutchinson lately, who seems to be getting tired of being on half-pay, and wants to get a ship. I had a letter from father the same day. Captain Rose talks of taking me on another trip for three or four days, to shoot ducks and geese. I hope he does! If you write immediately you get this, it will just about catch me at San Francisco, so write to there, and after that to the Pacific station. After leaving San Francisco we go to an uninhabited island, where there is wild bullock shooting, and that is about the last rifle shooting we shall have. It would be great fun to get a wild bullock. I shall take out my shot-gun with bullets, as they are good heavy ones and might bring a bullock down. About the best rifles you can get for that sort of shooting are a new pattern Winchester repeater. Each of our sub-lieutenants got one, which they bought on the way up, and they give

great satisfaction. Give my love to all the others. Good-bye from—Your very loving son,

EDWARD A. BAIRD.

P.S.—We leave San Francisco on the 24th.

LXVII.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

San Francisco, 19*th Nov.* 1887.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I got that five-pound note just as we were leaving Esquimalt; thanks very much indeed for it. I intended to buy a new rifle here, but find, unluckily, that they have got none of the sort I wanted, as they say the manufactory cannot turn them out fast enough. I have got the letter from you in which you say that you have met Captain Hutchinson's mother and sister. I never knew till now he had either mother or sister. I was dreadfully sea-sick coming down, as it was very rough just after leaving Esquimalt. This new Admiral seems a very good sort on the whole, and he has been very good to me in several ways. We have just heard that the *Swiftsure* will not be commissioned till February, which will bring us home a month later. Several of the men here have run away since we have been here, so we have to keep stricter watch than we used to. It is an awful bother about not being able to get the rifle I wanted, as it will be more expensive in England. Has father done much shooting lately? I suppose he has a good lot to do besides that.

Has he been able to give Captain Hutchinson any? The last day I got ashore at Esquimalt I got the whole day, and I was determined to get a deer. I was ten miles away before dawn, and I tramped till sunset without seeing a thing, when suddenly a small buck jumped up close to me. I broke one of its hips, but he still ran on. However, by running hard, I managed to come up with him, when I knocked him down and cut his throat. By the time I had cleaned his insides out it was pitch dark. I cut his head off, as it was not a very good one, and would catch in the bushes. I then picked him up and put him on my back. I had fifteen miles to carry him, and eight before I reached a road. Luckily I knew the country well, or I should have lost myself. It was very hard work, especially the first part of it, as it was all up and down hills, and with a weight like that on one's back it is almost impossible to recover oneself after a stumble. It took me just five hours to get back, which was very good considering the weight, the rough country, and the darkness. When I got on board he weighed about sixty pounds, which is not a big one. The new Flag-Lieutenant is a very good sort indeed, and a good sportsman. I took him out one day up at Esquimalt, and he got a nice doe. I told you some time ago that I knew a farmer's family of the name of Scafe, who always gave me tea there. Well, this old Scafe made a very good violin with his pocket-knife and a small gouge, and his son has taught himself to play on this, and he really plays it wonderfully. If you just whistle or hum a tune he will go and

play it right off, and it is an excellent violin. If he was taught a bit I believe he would do a lot. We leave here for San Diego on the 24th, where Captain Rose has promised to take me out quail-shooting. After that we are going to Santa Barbara, San Pedro, Magdalena Bay, Mazatlan, San Blas, Manzanilla, Acapulco, San José de Guatemala, Panama, Albemarle Island, Charles Island, Callao, Coquimbo, Valparaiso, where we shall be relieved by the *Swiftsure*. There is a nice little job for Master Randolph and Co. to look out all those places in the atlas! I have bought a case of skinning instruments, together with some chemicals for curing skins, as I intend to get lessons from some naturalist in stuffing birds, as it would be a great thing to be able to stuff birds for myself. I should think I might get hold of some chap in Salisbury who could teach me. I have no more to tell you. Give my love to all the children and father. Good-bye from—Your loving son, NED.

P.S.—Children includes them all, from Helena downwards.

LXVIII.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Undated, received *24th Feb.* 1888.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We are now at Acapulco. I have only been out twice on the way down, but had very good sport each time. The first time was at Magdalena Bay, where I shot twenty-five

curlew with my own gun ; I was out with Captain Rose. The next time was at Mazatlan with Mr Thynne, where I got thirteen duck and seven snipe. I was going to write to you from Mazatlan, but I found out that if I waited till we got here the letter would get home sooner. The *Conquest* came in the evening after we got here. She had been twenty-eight days at sea, having come from Honolulu, with head winds all the way. I don't know whether it is a true yarn, but I heard that we are going on a long sea cruise after leaving Panama, and are not going to touch in at any of the South American ports, on account of the cholera. But I expect we shall have to go to Coquimbo to get stores. We have just had a telegram to say that the date of our relief commissioning is uncertain, so I may not be home till the hunting season now. Captain Rose took the Admiral to the same lagoon he took me to last time we were here, and he found that all the teal had cleared out on account of the high water, and they only got three, but they got several alligators. I am going to write a letter to father before we leave here. This is awfully lazy weather, and I assure you it is quite an undertaking to write a letter. There is some talk of going to Honolulu again after leaving Panama, on account of these South American ports being closed, but everything is very unsettled. The temperature is very seldom below 85 now, which is much too hot for comfort, especially after coming down from a cold place like Esquimalt. How is Captain Hutchinson getting on ? He will have to come and stay with us when I get home.

It is wonderful what lots of fruit grows in this place, and also lots of that Indian corn, which is very good eating when it is boiled. I shall have to bring Captain Rose home, as I am sure you would like him very much. I suppose father remembers him at Portsmouth. When I went out with Mr Thynne, we started at 4.30 a.m. and were back by noon, as the ship left Mazatlan at 1 p.m. that day. I had excellent sport, but I lost several duck that I killed, as they kept falling into some thick bushes. There is no doubt about it that snipe-shooting is more fun than any other I know, as you always get them in the open and yet they are very hard to hit, as they have such a zig-zag flight and go so fast. We shall meet the *Hyacinth*, *Cormorant*, and *Espiègle* at Panama, where we shall get another midshipman, named Heneage, the nephew of the Admiral. He came out in the *Espiègle*, and is about a year junior to me. I think I may as well finish up here, as I can think of nothing more that would interest you. Give my love to all the others, and also to Uncle John, when you see him.—Your loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

LXIX.

H.M.S. *Triumph*. Arica, *9th April* 1888.

MY DEAR FATHER,—We had some fine fun the other day on leaving Callao. We turned out two big hulks, one of them a good bit longer than ourselves, and left them about eight hundred yards

apart. We then steamed backwards and forwards past them, about fifteen hundred yards off, firing at them with our heavy guns. Whenever a shell burst inside them, there was a tremendous clatter of breaking beams, etc., which went on for about half a minute after it burst. After the first twenty minutes the stern of the smaller one began to settle down, and after about five minutes down went the stern with a rush and up went the bow in the air. Then the whole thing went down, but just as it was disappearing the fore part was blown up into the air by the compressed air inside. It cleared the water by about two feet, and then disappeared again. The big one went down about a quarter of an hour afterwards in much the same way, except that the fore part did not come off. We just gave her a parting shot as she disappeared. A rather curious thing happened on the way down. As I suppose you know, we heave the log once every hour to see what speed the ship is going. The log is a piece of wood the shape of this, with lead all along the bottom to make it sit upright in the water. It has a long line attached to it, and is about a foot square. At 9 a.m. one day I hove it overboard, and no sooner had it touched the water than an old shark made for it and rushed away astern with it. I tried to hang on to the line, but it took all the skin off my fingers. Eventually he broke it, and the line was hauled in. We expect the *Swiftsure* out soon, and we ought to pay off about November, which will be a very good time. I hope you will have a nag for me, as I want to get some hunting if possible. We are

going to stop about a week at Coquimbo. There is some yarn that we are going out to the Fiji Islands, but I expect it is all rot, as there would hardly be time, and the flagship scarcely ever goes there. At Payta we used to bathe every morning and evening, but on the last day an enormous shark, about twenty feet long, was seen swimming round and round the ship, within ten feet, so the bathing was stopped. At San José a man was given 500 dollars (£100) for shooting a tiger shark twenty-five feet long, which had been the terror of the place for years. Tiger sharks are the most dangerous kind. This one was well known as San José Jack. Good-bye from—Your very loving son,

NED.

LXX.

To Admiral Sir J. K. E. Baird, K.C.B.

H.M.S. *Triumph*. Valparaiso, *30th April* 1888.

DEAR UNCLE JOHN,—I am afraid I am very slack in not writing to congratulate you on your new appointment, which I suppose is a very good billet. I suppose you heard that we had a change of commanders? We were very sorry to lose Captain Simpson, and we do not get on half as well without him. We have been at Valparaiso for a week, and the present arrangement is to stop for another week. The Admiral is staying up in Santiago with Captain Rose. I should think it was very nearly time that they commissioned the *Swiftsure*. I

suppose you have heard no reason for the delay? I suppose in the Channel Squadron you don't get as much time to yourself as you did in the Reserve. If ever we do get home, you must come and look us up. When we got to Coquimbo on the last day that we gave special leave, a respectable sort of woman was being insulted by a Chilian, and two of our bluejackets slung him out of the house. They were immediately attacked by several other Chilians. The woman saved one of them by hauling him into the house and locking the door, but the other, a sober, steady sort of man named Danvers, was stabbed in the stomach, arm, and thigh. He died two days after, on our way here, and was buried the day after we got in. The man who stabbed him has been caught, and is being tried. Have you had much shooting during this last winter, or have you been too busy? We had a paper-chase the other day, and I was one of the hares, being the only chap in the fleet who knew the country. I led them very much over our old course, which they said was too long. In fact, only the Flag-Lieutenant and Lieutenant Gray followed the paper up as far as the water-course on the side of the hill. All the remainder turned off on that sandy road before you get to it, and went on by the beach. However, those two followed it all the way round, and got in forty minutes after us. I have had very little sport as far as shooting goes, on the southern part of the station, but I may get a slant yet. The Flag-Lieutenant, Mr Thynne, is a very good sort, and often takes me out with him. I hope you will write me a line soon and tell me how you

like your new billet, and also what sort of sport you have been having. I suppose I shall be sent to the Training Squadron when we get back. However, I hope I shall get my eight weeks' leave. I suppose you have seen all these new regulations with regard to midshipmen? They evidently intend to give us little chance of leave or time to ourselves. We are to have cutter duty all next week, the next fortnight we are in three watches, and then we have cutter duty again, so we don't get ashore much. I don't think there is any more to tell you. Good-bye from—Your affectionate nephew,

EDWARD BAIRD.

LXXI.

H.M.S. *Triumph.* Valparaiso, 19*th May* 1888.

MY DEAR FATHER,—We had a grand paper-chase here the other day, in which you will be glad to hear that Master Ned distinguished himself. I think I have told you there is a paper-chase club here, and the officers of the ships were invited. A very good sort of fellow that I met here lent me a grey horse about 14½ hands, half Arab and half Chilian, and I believe he was as good a jumper as there was there, although there were some great big horses of 16 hands and more there. We went up by a special train to a place called Limache, where the country is very like English, with capital

hedges, and also posts and rails. There were only two or three people out of seventy-five who went over all the big posts and rails, and my grey was the horse that did not refuse once, and he flew everything without touching them. I nearly always had to give them a lead over the big poles. The biggest jump was just at the end, out of a field into a road, and he took it clean without touching it, after three hours' good hard riding. It was over a post and rails which we measured afterwards and found was four feet eleven inches high, which is a good jump after a long run like that. After it was over, all the naval officers congratulated me, and said I was a credit to the ship; but in reality it was nothing to do with me—I simply had to give him his head and stick on, as he was most eager to jump. The fellow who lent him me (Cooper) was awfully good to me all round, giving me dinners and all sorts of things. I went out riding with him again last Sunday, and I took the grey over the two biggest jumps in the steeplechase course, a stone wall four feet six inches high, and a hedge of four feet with thirteen feet of water beyond it. The water was four feet deep. I don't know whether I told you we had a paper-chase at Coquimbo, in which I was hare, but it was a very tame affair compared to this one. I went out shooting here the other day, but only got a few pigeons. There are lots of English people here, and uncommonly good fellows they are. They have made us honorary members of their clubs, and lent us horses and all sorts of things. We have started polo among the officers, which is an uncommonly good game;

only, my wrist is hardly strong enough, as the stick is heavy. Mr Thynne, the Flag-Lieutenant, has given me a very good pair of riding-trousers, which are an endless blessing, as one wears out one's other trousers so quickly. Give my love to Mum and all the kids, and congratulate Long Kate for me on passing her exam. Tell Randy he and I will have to go hunting together next winter. Send me a line soon.—Your loving son, NED.

LXXII.

H.M.S. *Triumph*. Coquimbo, 25*th June* 1888.

MY DEAR FATHER,—Thanks very much indeed for the fiver you sent me; it came in very handy, as one gets through a precious lot of money by hiring horses for riding here. We got up a grand steeple-chase here, of which I send you a rough sketch. The prize was a silver cup, which you will be glad to hear that "Master Ned" won. I can tell you that I am very pleased with myself. Eleven horses started all but one being ridden by officers of the fleet. I was third favourite at starting, the shore-going chap was first favourite. He had a beautiful horse for out here, with English blood in him, and well known as a capital jumper. He came in second, but I beat him by a hundred yards on a two-mile course. The second favourite was ridden by the First Lieutenant of the *Conquest*, and was also

a private horse, and a noted jumper. However, he had a fall over one of the fences, and came in last. As you see by the sketch, there are twelve jumps, and as we went round the course twice it made twenty-four. My horse was just one I had hired a few days before, at a Chilian livery stable, when I just practised him at jumping a bit. The first hurdle, filled up with brushwood, was where the second favourite collapsed. The first jump of all was a ditch about four feet broad, and a hedge beyond it, and we finished up by coming over it in the opposite direction. At the wall into the little enclosure my horse refused twice, but I managed to get him over it the third time, and the second time round he took it quite easily. Mr Thynne, the Flag-Lieutenant, is a great blessing to the ship, as he gets up everything in this way, both polo and paper-chases. I suppose we shall be home in November, and I think it would be a good plan to send me out a suit of plain clothes to meet me at Madeira, as the things I have now will be in rags by that time, and I should not be able to land in England with them. I hope you will have a good horse about that time, as I have got awfully fond of riding lately, and I think I have improved a bit. It is expected that we shall leave here in about a week's time for about ten days. On the evening after the steeple-chase I dined with the admiral. I have not got the cup yet, as it is being engraved. It is going to cost about three pounds ten shillings, so it ought to be a very nice one. I was awfully sold the other day. I was just starting for a day's shooting with some other officers, when I was taken

bad with what the doctor called colic. For about two hours I could hardly move, and was dosed with castor oil to any extent, but by about the middle of the day I was all right again, but had missed my day's shooting. There is some talk of having another steeplechase when the *Swiftsure* comes out, if there is time, but I hardly expect there will be. I do hope next winter will not be a hard one, as I want to get as much hunting as possible. I see from your letter that Didy and Randy have taken to hunting. I suppose Di has not managed to get the brush yet. Will you thank her for all her letters to me, and also all the others? Give my love to Mum, and say I will write soon. Drop me a line when you have time. Good-bye, from—Your loving son, NED.

LXXIII.

H.M.S. *Triumph.* Coquimbo, 29*th July* 1888.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We have just got back here after being away a fortnight. We were five days at Caldera, and ten days at sea. I have just got my steeplechase cup, which is very fine. We expect the *Swiftsure* to be here in another week, so that we ought to be home about the beginning of November. We shall not come back the same way as we came out, as, instead of going to Monte Video and Madeira, we shall go to Rio de Janeiro and Lisbon. Will you ask father if he has any objection to my having a suit of riding-clothes? The things that most naval officers wear are either

corduroy or buckskin breeches, and black riding-boots, but of course he will know the best sort to get. I will send the measure for a pair of breeches; of course, I shall have to try the boots on. I had been out for a ride the other day, on my old friend who won the steeplechase, and was coming through some fields by way of a short cut. Some Chilians saw me coming, and went and put up a lot of bars, and padlocked them, so that I could not get out without going back about two miles. The bars were out of the question, as they were over six feet high, but there was a stone wall alongside them, a little over four feet, and two feet thick, which I thought I might just jump. These Chilians were jeering like anything, thinking they had got me, when before they could stop me, I made a rush at the wall, and cleared it. The horse is only about 14 hands, so that is a very big jump for him, especially as a month ago he could not jump at all. We have just finished our yearly exams., in which I did a great deal better than last time. When the *Swiftsure* comes out we are going to have a last paper-chase before we leave the station, and I mean to ride the same horse. One of our midshipmen, named Lambert, has just lost his father, and has gone on a month's leave. On our way back from Caldera we came in for a gale of wind, and got a good deal knocked about. We did prize firing with heavy guns the other day, and made very good shooting indeed. There is no more news to tell you. Good-bye, from—Your very loving son,

EDWARD BAIRD.

LXXIV.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Sandy Point, *11th September* 1888.

My dear Mother,—We are well on our way home now, and you may expect us at Plymouth about the middle of November. We have been very lucky so far, in the way of winds. I have had a little shooting in the Straits, but it is the wrong time of year. However, at one place where we anchored I killed my first Brent goose, at which I was very pleased. It is horribly cold weather, so you must excuse a short letter. Give my love to father and all the others, and tell father I hope he is looking out for a horse for me. We leave here either to-morrow night or the next morning. I will write again from Rio de Janeiro, which is the next place we stop at. Good-bye, from—Your very loving son, Edward Baird.

LXXV.

H.M.S. *Triumph.*

Rio de Janeiro, *27th September* 1888.

My dearest Mother,—I am afraid I wrote you rather a hasty letter from Sandy Point, but there was not much time before the steamer went. We have still been very lucky, as we have done in thirteen days a distance which we expected to take nineteen. This seems to be a very nice place, although I have not been ashore yet. We found

three English ships here, belonging to this station. I wish I had come here, as there seems to be splendid sport of all kinds out here, much more than on the Pacific station. Captain Rose introduced me to the senior Captain out here (there is no Admiral), whose name is Kennedy. He is a friend of Uncle John's, and seems to be a very good sort. He has asked me to breakfast with him, which he has at 11.30. I hope you will be able to read this, as the mail steamer which is just going is the only chance. We have had six mails now without a letter from you; I hope none have gone adrift. It is almost certain we shall pay off at Plymouth, which is a nuisance—in the first place because it is so far from home, and also because it will be so awkward packing up my things, as if we were at Portsmouth, Fraser & Davis would look out for them. I am awfully anxious to see you all, as I shall have been away close on four years. I shall be entitled to eight weeks' leave, which I hope I shall get. We ought not to be more than five weeks more at the most. I hope I shall get a letter at St Vincent, just to tell me how you are. As far as we know at present, there is every chance of our not going to Lisbon at all, but to the Azores instead. Good-bye, dear old Mum, from—Your very loving son, NED.

———

THE day of our son's return, after his long absence, was a happy one for us all. He arrived, without giving us notice, about nine o'clock in the morning, having walked from Fordingbridge Station to Nea House, Ringwood, where we then lived.

He had grown so tall that his clothes were far too short for him. His voice had deepened, but the fair sunburnt face was the same.

He was carrying his saddle, wrapped in a large cotton handkerchief, slung over his shoulder, and in one hand a foreign-looking cage, containing two green love-birds, as a present for me.

We had hoped that he would be some time at home, but all too soon an order came for him to join the Training Squadron, to go to the West Indies. This he did on the 11th November 1888, ten days after his return.

There are many other letters, written from ships in different parts of the world, and if time and strength allow, I shall hope to have more of them printed.

E. D. BAIRD.

November 1911.